RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

AUGUST

25 CTS.

When Redwood Went Dry
by
Bob Cross

The Railroad in the Sky
by
L. C. Davis

—

Selling Passenger Service
by
Franklin Snow

The Mask of Ching Wo
by
Max Brand

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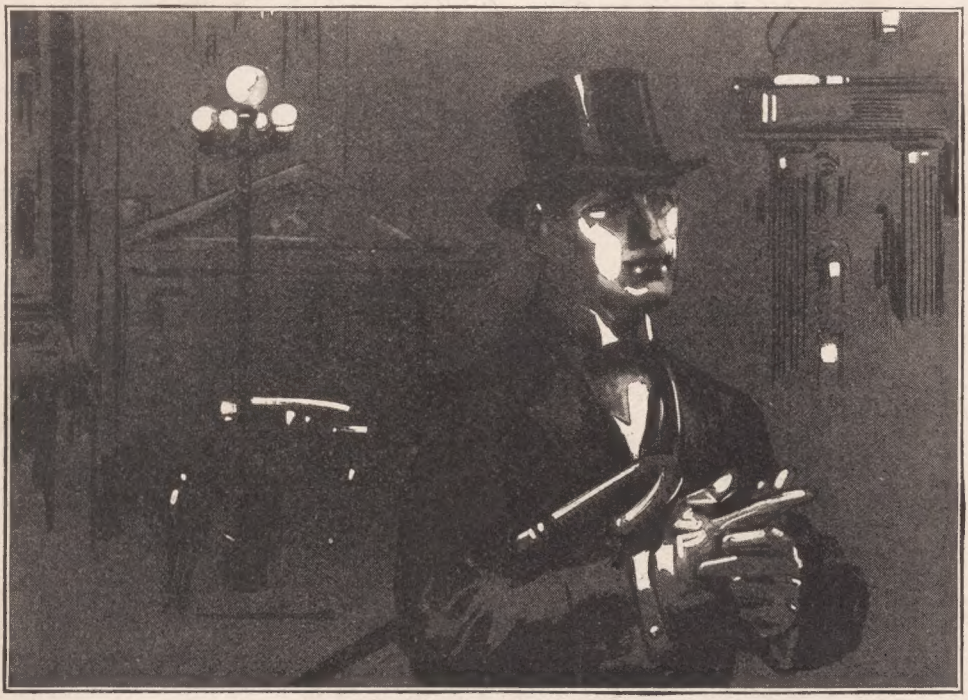

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RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Features

Bill Egan—Station Master De Luxe ..... By John A. Thompson 1
An Intimate Sketch of the Country's Biggest Depot Boss.
Photographs

The Railroad in the Sky ..... By Leslie C. Davis 6
It Took a Yankee Engineer to Hang the Rails Three Miles High.
Photographs

Selling Passenger Service ..... By Franklin Snow 50
Dressing Up the Coaches to Snare the Traveler's Eye.
Photographs

Operators' "Fist" Contest 81
Three Awards Are Announced in International Competition.

The Sun Sets on the Hump Rider ..... By Earle W. Gage 83
The Mechanical Age Is Fast Wiping Out a Pioneer.
Photographs

Steel to the West (Three Parts—Part I) ..... By Edwin C. Hill 115
An Hour's Talk with Lincoln Started the U. P. Trail.
Photographs

Serials

The Mask of Ching Wo (Six Parts—Part I) ..... By Max Brand 62
The Beginning of a Great Novel of the Raw West.
Illustrated by Fred Small

Rolling Wheels (Four Parts—Part II) ..... By Don Waters 138
The Boomer Waits for Death and Prays for Life.
Illustrated by M. Burs

Novelette and Short Stories

When Redwood Went Dry (Novelette) ..... By Bob Cross 16
Windy Bill, Rule G and a Gum-Shoe Named Trent.
Illustrated by Harry C. Temple

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A Magazine For Railroaders

August, 1930 Vol. III—No. 1

Mail Pirate ..... By Russel Hays 37
A Pal May Ride the Skids but He Never Forgets.
Illustrated by Joseph Easley

Smiling Smith Sits In ..... By Charles W. Tyler 92
His Big Hands Held the Fate of a Crew at the Bridge.
Illustrated by John R. Neill

Honk and Horace ..... By Emmet F. Harte 125
High Romance Hinges on a Fisherman's Fancy.
Illustrated by Walter De Maris

True Stories

My Greatest Thrill 107

Kennedy's Last Holdup ..... By Bill Finley
A Sawed-off Gun in a Fireman's Face.

Scissor-Bill's Short Flag ..... By James William Fraser
He Saw Death as the Limited Rolled On By.

Departmental and Miscellany

By the Light of the Lantern 89
The Boomers' Corner 154
On the Spot ..... With the Editors 156
The Poets' Corner 159
Cover Design: Canadian Pacific's Trans-Canada Limited. *A Photograph*

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By A. W. SOMERVILLE

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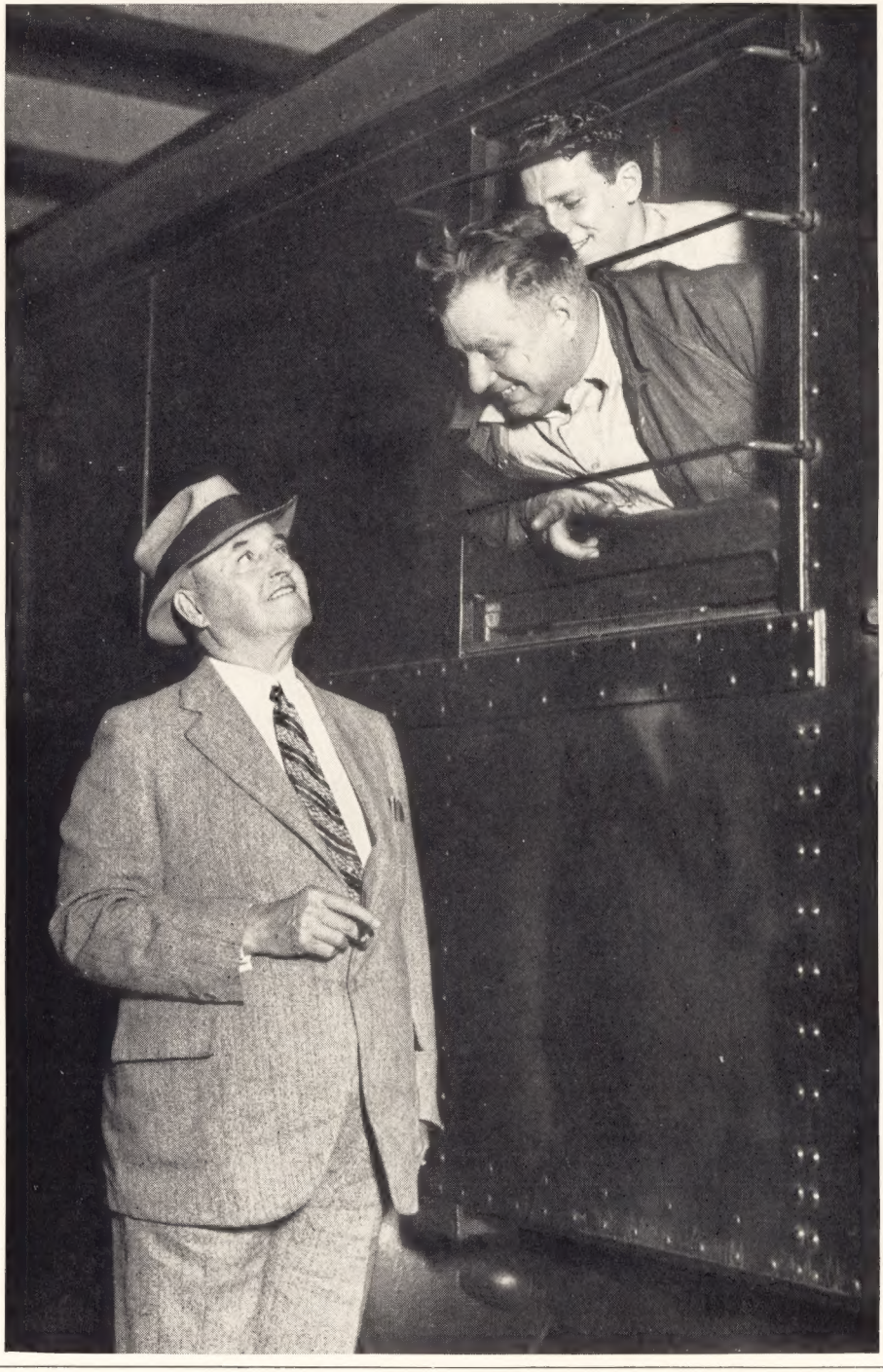


Railroad Man's Magazine, August, 1930

"DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT—?"

Bill Egan, Master of Penn Station, Swaps Wise Cracks with William Feltman, Engineer on the Broadway Limited, and His Fireman, Norman J. Selig

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Vol. III AUGUST, 1930 No. 1

Bill Egan—Station Master De Luxe

He Began by Braking Freight and Now He Runs a Depot and Rubs Elbows with the Great

By John A. Thompson

IT isn't correct simply to call Bill Egan a high class station master. There ought to be some sort of title that would indicate the tremendous responsibilities involved in being station master of the Pennsylvania Railroad terminal in New York, one of the biggest, and certainly one of the busiest, railroad depots on the globe, with its sixty-five million passengers a year to be looked after.

Unlike poets and other natural phenomena of nature station masters are made, not born. Bill Egan did the job himself. And he speaks of it not boastfully, but just to show what can happen to an old time brakeman who always thought the link and pin coupling was a deuce of a way to hitch cars together anyhow.

Air was just a new-fangled notion when Bill came down from Newtown, Connecticut, and convinced the Pennsylvania Railroad that they would get along better with him than without him, and also that a job of work was the one thing he needed most. That was back in 1884, and Bill, broad-shouldered, athletic, strong, began his railroad career braking freight on the New York division.

Pretty soon Bill moved into passenger service. He had too much personality for the road to waste on a string of box cars.

"I used to brake with Edward E. Bossert," he said reminiscently. "Ed to-day is one of the oldest active conductors on the Pennsylvania system, and there isn't a better railroad man in the country."

Young Egan was getting along, and the first thing he knew in 1897 the Pennsylvania built the last word in ferry terminals at the foot of Twenty-third Street. Bill was made station master. Right away Bill Egan started

to do things. In the first place he organized a nifty cab service for the customers.

Value of Personal Service

Bill's fleet was composed of the good old hansom cabs. Maybe they weren't so speedy, but they had it all over the horse cars and they'd take you pretty nearly any place in town, two people for a quarter. A third passenger was ten cents extra.

Inside the station Bill began doing little things for the railroad's customers himself. Never too busy to listen to a complaint or to straighten out a difficulty. Tactful, pleasant, smiling. Pretty soon Senators, bankers, big business men and ordinary taxpayers riding down to Washington began to talk about Egan—and his railroad.

Ed Bossert, 46 Years a Passenger Conductor and Nearly 50 Years with the P. R. R., Talks Over Old Times with Egan, Who Braked for Him Back in '89

Personal services over a period of years have a cumulative effect. They pile up, create a definite impression. Bill didn't know at the time because he wasn't thinking of such things, but down at Twenty-third Street he was building himself up for what is probably the biggest station master job in the world. These services made people who passed through Bill's station like to come back the same way whenever they had a chance.

Twenty years ago the Pennsylvania opened its magnificent depot in the heart of the midtown shopping and hotel district in New York. A canvass was made of every possible candidate for the important job of station master. Men from the whole extent of the system were considered.

Egan's qualifications were a congenial personality plus a good record, plus his experience as station master at the ferry terminal and as substitute at the Trenton and Newark stations.

Bill Egan got the job. He was down there six months before the station was officially opened, and he's been there ever since. Recently he has been promoted to general station master for the New York division, a title and a position both unique in the annals of railroading. Now, besides having to look out for his own station where he has some twenty-four hundred men under him, he has to tour the other depots in the vicinity and see that everything is according to the rule book.

An Ambassador's Job

"What are the biggest problems you have to face as station master?" Egan was asked.

"You don't regard them as problems when you're interested in a job," he answered. "Of course we had our hands full during the war, when several other railroads came into Penn. Station and we were moving troops

"Be with You in a Minute," Says Egan to Engineer Eugene Riordan, Who Seems to Have Urgent Business to Discuss in the Station Master's Office

and war supplies. Ordinarily, the station master's job is like an ambassador's. He is expected to sell good-will to the public."

Ever notice the number of celebrities who arrive in New York via the Penn. station? Why? Ask Bill Egan.

He knows most of the celebrities. Many of them are personal friends of his. The walls of his office are covered with autographed photographs of people you read about.

For instance there's a signed picture of the Prince of Wales. Further along is Sarah Bernhardt's photograph with a little personal message to Bill written

by the great actress when she was in this country in 1918 on her farewell tour. In between Madame Bernhardt and the prince is Grover Cleveland.

Round about are General Pershing. Thomas Lipton, Calvin Coolidge, Ramsay MacDonald, John McGraw, Admiral Beatty, Clemenceau, Clarence Chamberlin, Grover Whalen, Victor Herbert, Madame Schumann-Heink and a host of others. You name your favorite prominent person and ten to one Bill Egan has helped him catch a train out of the Penn. station or greeted him coming in at some time or other.

Bill likes to meet such people. He likes to make them feel at home. And he can do it too, whether he's talking to a foreign ambassador, an opera singer or an ordinary business man.

Bill is sociable. Better than that, he is natural. There is nothing affected about his manner of greeting any one. Maybe that's part of the secret of his personality.

A View of the Throne Room

His office—his private inner sanctum isn't what you'd expect to find around a railroad. Bill sits at a huge walnut desk with his back to a row of windows from which he can see the trains. If anything goes wrong with a train movement he is onto it instantly, instinctively almost. Besides Bill's desk there are several comfortable leather upholstered chairs.

Leading from the office is a small dressing room and, from that, a washroom fitted up with a fancy tiled shower bath. Just in case some prominent person coming in after a tedious train ride might want to freshen up.

Bill sits at his desk in neat, smartly tailored clothes. You might take him to be a banker. He says he is sixty-six. He looks fifty, perhaps fifty-five at the most. He is single. Which may or may not have something to do with it. Bill is far too diplomatic to make any rash statements.

On the other hand maybe it's Bill's camp up in the foothills of the Berkshires that keeps him so physically fit. He's got about twelve acres of woodland up there and plenty of fishing. Tents of course to live in and a small menagerie. It's not as big as the private zoo his friend, Al Smith, delighted in when he was Governor. And it is certainly not as lavish as the excellent collection of animals another friend of his, William Randolph Hearst, has out in California. Still it is a pretty good start for a man who is practically a beginner.

"I do a little hunting, too," said Bill. "Pheasants and partridges."

When he can get away, which isn't very often, Bill goes up to his camp; it is located near Newtown, his birthplace. The rest of his time is spent on the job. He lives only a block or two away from the station and he is liable to be called out of bed for any kind of emergency.

A Fight Fan, Too

Egan is a fight fan. He remembers fondly his friendship with the great old John L. Sullivan. That was back in the days when Bill Egan was just starting in to collect friendships, acquaintances and autographs among the famous. Bill has kept right along with the prize fighters. One minute he's mentioning Bob Fitzsimmons and the next he's telling about Tunney, who invariably steps into his office for a little chat whenever he is in the station.

Bill's enthusiasm for baseball is equally keen, and he used to be a crackerjack player himself not so long ago.

Nobody who knows Egan would

think of calling him anything else but Bill. In his case "Bill" doesn't stand for familiarity. The man's compelling companionableness forces you to call him "Bill" in spite of yourself. Bill doesn't mind. After all when he was braking freight back in '84 everybody called him Bill. He's the same fellow to-day, isn't he? Even if he has a big and important job to look after.

"I suppose my greatest thrill," he said, "was being caught between two moving box cars in South Philadelphia, back in the days when I was a brakeman. By all the laws of mechanics I should have been crushed to death, but somehow I escaped with a broken shoulder and a wrenched back."

Bill Egan has been railroading ever since he started in to work. Forty-five years with one road, the first road he went to work for. That is a creditable service record. It speaks a lot for Bill. It also speaks a lot for the railroad.

One of Bill's Pleasantest Duties Is to Make Celebrities Feel at Home in Penn Station. He Is Shown Here with Bobby Jones, the Golf Wizard

Ticlio, at an Elevation of 15,665 Feet, Is the Highest Town on This Remarkable Peruvian Railroad. La Cima Is in the Open Pass in the Background at 15,865 Feet—the Highest Standard Gauge Point in the World

The Railroad in the Sky

A Yankee Engineer Hung the Central of Peru Over a Summit Three Miles in the Air

By Leslie C. Davis

DOWN in the land of bananas, romance and revolutions, rearing its head three miles into the sky, there stands to-day, after fifty years, a living monument to a Yankee engineer, and one of the most daring feats of railroad construction in the world's history.

This monument is a railroad. They call it the Central Railroad of Peru, or the Oroya Railroad, and starting at scratch at sea level, it snakes its way up and over the Continental Divide at an elevation of 15,865 feet.

Fifteen times higher than the Chrysler Building in New York. A whole mile higher than the famous Tennessee Pass on the Denver and Rio Grande Western. Thousands of feet higher than the normal flying altitude of planes across the United States.

The Central of Peru doesn't have a thousand miles to achieve this height in, either. The steel runs from sea level to the summit—from waving banana patches and tropic verdure to bleak, arcticlike wastes in less than a hundred miles and within a few hours. Riding along this amazing trail you

can experience every extreme of weather from a baking sun in a brassy sky to the frosted chill of the poles.

This railroad is a result of the ability of Henry Meiggs, a Yankee engineer who sometime during the 1860's left San Francisco reputed a bankrupt. Arriving in Peru he found the government with the means and inclination to construct a railroad into the mountains, but no one bold enough to undertake it. Meiggs did the job, and made for himself a world-wide reputation; paid all his back debts, and lived to see his work recognized and praised throughout both American continents.

Constructing this road in a region geologically new, where the contour of the land awaits the stabilizing influence of father time, the problems confronting Henry Meiggs were stupendous. New geology means unstable cliffs and crumbling ledges—a very serious problem in railroad building. Following the Ramic River from its mouth to its source, there was the eternal question of keeping the road out of the river bed.

There is a story told of how, in the course of the work, the surveyors came upon a crumbling cliff thousands of feet high. The roadbed could neither go below nor above this. One of the young surveyors turned to Meiggs and said:

"We can't go up there, Mr. Meiggs; nothing but a balloon can reach that point."

Meiggs's reply was characteristic of the man:

"Well, son, you had better get a balloon, then, for that is where we are going."

And that is where they went!

When the construction gang reached

The Yards at Matucana. On the Extreme Right Is a Car Equipped With Headlight and Pilot, Which Goes Down the Mountain by Gravity on Regular Time Card Schedule

The Author in the Cab of a "Mike" at La Cima—Right Up There on Top of the World

an elevation of 5,000 feet the workmen began to die with a very malignant disease called Verrugas. A cañon at this point required a big steel bridge. It was erected after long delays and with tragic results. Because of the many deaths from the malady the structure was called "Verrugas Bridge," the name it bears to-day. At that time the disease had not been worked out. No one knew what caused it. Men died until it was difficult to get workmen. Recently medical experts have found the disease to be transmitted by a small fly which bites only at night, and then in the absence of artificial light. Now all passenger trains are scheduled by this point in daylight.

The higher the road got the more difficult the physical features of construction became. There are sixty-five tunnels and twenty-one switchbacks within sixty miles of the summit.

The western slope of the Andes in Peru is a desert region. However, it sometimes rains, as in all arid climates. Local showers convert dry gulches into tumbling cascades. Rocks in a stream that has a continuous flow of water will soon find permanent lodgment some place along its course. Not so with those having spasmodic flows. Rocks falling into them when they are dry are swept along with the wall of water. Sometimes such streams will carry along bowlders five feet in diameter. No bridge can withstand such current.

Bridge for the Water

One such stream gave so much trouble that a concrete aqueduct was constructed over the roadbed to carry the bowlder-charged water overhead, it not being possible to construct such a passage underneath. It was a case of building a bridge for the water over

the railroad instead of for the railroad over the river.

When the road was built power and steel were light, therefore trains were short, and switchbacks were limited to a few cars, the clearance limit being an engine and five cars. This eliminated the possibility of operating double headers. The problem of heavier power and steel is simple, but not so with lengthening switchbacks which, in some instances, end against a mountain where it would be necessary to drive a tunnel back into solid rock to secure more room. At other points the track ends on the very brink of a precipice where it would be impossible to lengthen. A new location would have to be sought, and the present business does not justify this expense. When present facilities prove inadequate, no doubt a new line will be located elsewhere, or other means of transportation will be used.

There has been but little change in the location since construction of this road except for safety measures. Once, in early days, a derailed locomotive went into a cañon so far below the roadbed that no attempt was made to salvage the wreck.

Locomotives and passenger equipment have vacuum brakes; freight cars hand brakes only. But since three loads are all an engine can handle going up there is always brakemen enough to handle the trains downhill by hand.

Sometimes coming down the sixth car will be put on a train. This extra car is cut off from the train and with a man riding it, pendulums through the switchbacks alone. It is then coupled on to the train below the switchbacks. Cars equipped with head-

Natives Sell Fruit at the Station of San Bartolome While the Train Prepares to Head Down into the Treacherous Cañons

A Station Stop on the Long Climb to the Summit of this Amazing Main Line. Note the Wooden Coaches With the Open Platforms

light, pilots, and hand brakes are handled down alone by gravity, doing local work en route. These are usually milk runs.

Lookouts on a small four-wheel push car with a good hand brake and comfortable seat for two, go down ahead of passenger trains to look out for rocks which may have fallen on the track from above. In many places there are crumbling slides where it is necessary to construct concrete shutes to carry the débris over the track.

Owned by Government

Slides often break the line in the wet season. Clearing an active slide which extends 2,000 feet above is a serious problem. On one such occasion lookouts had to be established on the opposite side of the cañon, and when bowlders started down the workmen were warned in time to run for safety before the bowlder reached the point where they were working. It was hazardous work, but it was the only way to clear the track.

The Central Railroad of Peru is government owned, but operated under a lease by the Peruvian Corporation, an English concern. Passenger tariff is about eight dollars from Lima to Oroya, 216 kilometers, or about 133 miles. This tariff is flexible, depending upon the exchange rate between the English pound sterling and the Peruvian pound. The officials are all English, but the personnel is otherwise Peruvian.

The road begins to climb upon leaving the seaport, Callao, and the eight miles to Lima is made at a little over one per cent grade. From Lima to Chosica, which is at kilometer 54, the grade is almost two per cent. This is along the Ramic River through an open plain with the foothills narrowing to the river at Chosica where they form a V-shaped valley. On this plain is grown alfalfa, cotton, and sugar cane.

Chosica is a resident town, and short runs are made between here and Lima, carrying commuters. There are

roundhouse and yards at Chosica. Crews work both ways out of there. Freight trains from tidewater are broken up at Chosica, as the grade from there to the Continental Divide is four per cent and more.

Passenger trains usually consist of five cars, two first class, two second class, and one *equipaje,* combination mail and baggage. One of the cars has club service, and a good meal is served for two soles, fifty—about one dollar of United States money.

Leaving the terminal the club car in which most North Americans ride will be next to the engine. At San Bartolome, 46 miles out, the engine is cut off, turned on a table and put on the other end of the train. Leaving San Bartolome the train starts back the direction from which it came, apparently, but in reality it is taking a track at a higher level. Following a gulch it swings around and soon heads east again far above San Bartolome.

The climb has been up the side of the mountain away from the Ramic, but that stream soon is found near the tracks again, sometimes near the track level, other times far below. When the track gets down near the river level, or the river gets up near the track—which ever one chooses to call it—the track will go into a higher level by means of a switchback, only to lose the advantage and have it all to do over again in a short distance.

Matucana, 59 miles up the hill, is another point where crews tie up. The higher up the mountain the higher the rate of pay. And it is for this reason that crews make short turns in freight service.

The elevation of Matucana is 7,788 feet. San Mateo, some 18 miles farther up, is a very beautiful site. The track is on the hillside, 250 feet above the town which is located in one of the few places where the Ramic has a few acres of flat valley. The various col-

A Switchback Along the Way

ored houses are very picturesque, set among the eucalyptus trees with green patches of alfalfa growing in the background.

Going on up the hill the track is soon crowded into a narrow gorge beside the Ramic, between towering granite walls, very similar to the Royal Gorge. The exhaust of the locomotive is resounded between the walls until it is almost deafening. Soon, when the gorge narrows down to accommodate only the river, the tracks swing into a tunnel. A moment later you come out into the daylight onto a bridge directly over the raging Ramic and then plunge into a tunnel on the opposite side. This bridge is called *Infiernillo Puente* (Hell's Bridge), a daring piece of engineering which is glimpsed only briefly. I have never yet seen a traveler, no matter how seasoned, who did not gaze spellbound at this marvelous sight. This is one of the scenic exclamation points of the world! It is like a first sight of the Grand Cañon, Yosemite Falls in winter, or a sunset on the Amazon River.

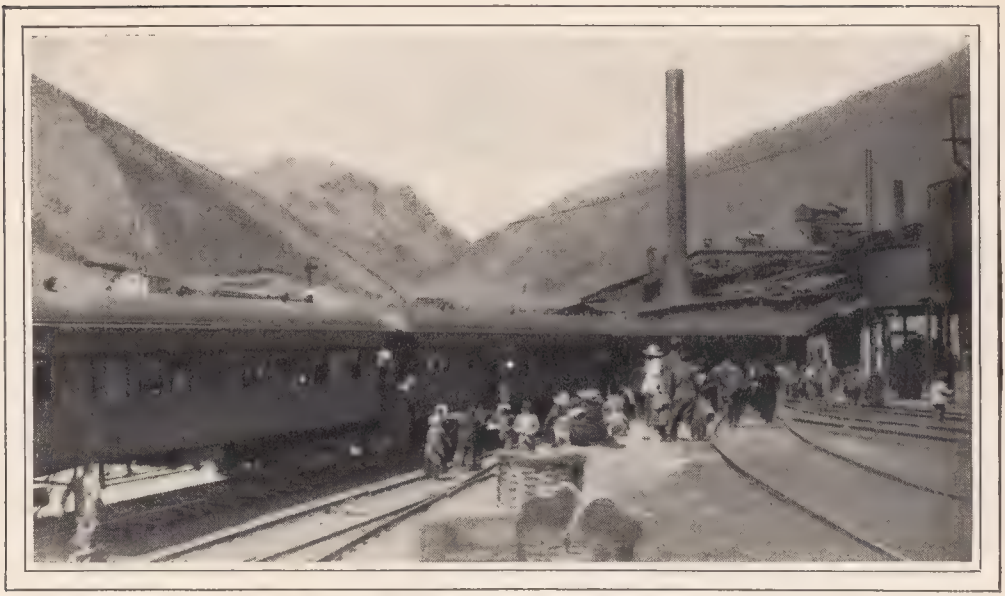
Nearing the Clouds

A SHORT distance above, the track comes out of the upper tunnel and continues on its way, doubling through switchbacks and tunneling through corners, but always going up and up, while the crags and walls of the Andes are ever towering into the very clouds overhead. Taking up a side stream from the right the track follows this out of the Ramic valley far away into the hills until it comes to a station beside this small tumbling stream. This stream is *Rio Blanco* (White River), so named because of the white spray of its rapids. The station bears the same name.

Leaving Rio Blanco the road doubles back along the east side of the cañon to its old friend, the Ramic.

At Casapalca is a mine which be-

Five Tunnels and Three Switchbacks Are Necessary to Get You out of Chicla, Shown Nestling in the Valley. At the Right Center You See the Entrance to the First Tunnel



Meeting the Train at Casapalca, Mine Camp

longs to the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation. There are always a bunch of North Americans at this depot to see who is passing through. In fact, there is a sort of family gathering each time a passenger train passes this point, as there are usually employees from the other Cerro de Pasco units on these trains. Even the wives and other members of the employees' families maintain contact by meeting the trains and having a general visit. Most of the company's holdings are farther into the interior.

Above Casapalca the land surface changes. Instead of the barren rocks there is a layer of soil over most of the land surface. But, unfortunately, this is in a frost belt where nothing can be grown; in fact it is the daily freezing and thawing that has broken down the rock into soil. Frequently retaining walls are necessary to keep the track from slipping off the hillside into the cañon.

At Ticlio the main line goes through Galera tunnel. There is a branch line from here through an open pass to the north to Morococha, another Cerro de Pasco mine. On this branch line is La Cima, which means summit in English. This is the highest standard gauge railroad point in the world, elevation 15,865 feet. It is doubtful if another railroad will ever be constructed at this elevation, for there isn't much of the world over three miles high.

From Ticlio over to the south up a gentle slope of red clay one may see the summit of Mt. Meiggs, so named in honor of Henry Meiggs—elevation 17,775 feet, the highest peak in this locality. This mountain being south of the equator the north slope gets the most sunshine. It looks as though it would be easy to stroll up there, and it would be if the air were not so rarefied. At 16,000 feet atmospheric pressure is just one half of what it is at sea level. One trip to the summit of Mt. Meiggs was enough for me. I never expect to go any higher than that—and my preacher tells me I am very likely right.

Only a Signboard Marks the Station of Viso, Near Which Is Located a Mineral Spring

When one gets above 15,000 feet elevation the altitude usually has a serious effect. People with weak hearts cannot go over the Divide. Oxygen tanks are carried on all passenger trains to revive those overcome by the altitude. One with a weak heart should never attempt the trip.

I once knew a fellow who worked in the interior who developed a weak heart while there and could not cross the Divide to get back to the Pacific. He went out down the Amazon River, only to die of fever when he reached the Atlantic coast.

Relief With the Descent

Also *soroche,* or mountain sickness, severely affects some people, others not at all. I never had it, but it is usually a severe pain in the back of the head sometimes accompanied by nausea. Most of the passengers making this trip for the first time behave like those making their first sea voyage when the going becomes choppy.

Coming down out of the cold, rarefied air at the summit where one is muffled up, like one would be in Alaska, there is a feeling of relief with each mile descending toward the warm tropical coast. I have never come down the hill yet but what I thought of what a reckless hand of "strip poker" one could play on such a trip.

A ride over this railroad is interesting from an historical standpoint, also. One will see on the hillsides of the mountains, a thousand feet up, terraced land where sometimes three feet of retaining wall is necessary for every foot of level ground gained. These terraced places were filled with soil carried, in some cases, from a distance, where the Incas cultivated for centuries before the coming of the Spaniards, just four hundred years ago. Even to-day one may sometimes see Indians scraping soil off the ledges where it rolls down the hill to carry it off for garden use.

The elaborate irrigation systems constructed by the Incas high up on the hillsides, are no more. Only a

scant green strip near the river bed shows where agriculture is carried on to-day. The land now only supports a scant per cent of what it did when white men first came.

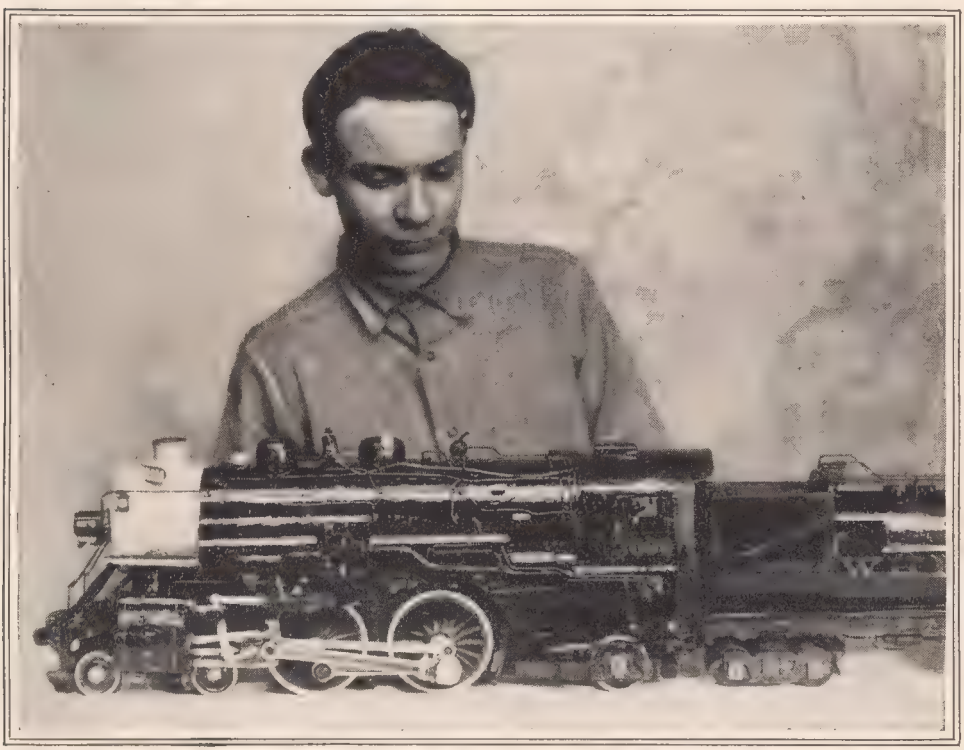
Although officials of the Central have made heroic efforts to stimulate and promote the production of freight shipments to move from the interior to tidewater, greater tonnage still moves up instead of down.

Beyond the Continental Divide the Central Railroad operates about 94 miles of track on the Andean plateau. The lowest point reached east of the Divide is Huancayo, at an elevation of 10,690 feet.

As yet there are no railroads from the plateau regions of Peru into the lowlands of the interior, beyond the Andean chain. However, there are several projected lines and some which are partly constructed. The main difficulty is that Peru can't find another Henry Meiggs.

The possibilities for future development in Peru really would make another story. It will take but a few years more to see written in large letters, another epic of railroad progress. In the wake of this construction will follow a new industrial empire in the rarefied reaches of Peru's immortal hills.

BUILT WITH A JACKKNIFE



William Fonger, Southern Pacific Apprentice at Sacramento Shops, Built This Scale Model of a 3000 Class Engine, Using a Pocket Knife as His Principal Tool

Pete Sits Down in the Chair an' Spreads Out His Newspaper. "Bill," He Says, Pointing to Big Headlines, "Have You Gave This Any Thought?"

When Redwood Went Dry

The Third Trick Hands and the Yard Boss Figured a Swell Way to Develop an Oasis

By Bob Cross

"WELL, sir" — William Henry Henly, known the length and breadth of the Middle West in railroad circles as "Windy Bill," eyed the circle suspiciously, his gold teeth gleaming in the dim light of the switch shanty—"well, sir, you boys in your sweet, clean innocence can have that stuff all to yourselves. Thanks for sendin' that bandy-legged yard clerk in to give me the word. Don't reckon you know I'm a busy man in this here yard. Switchmen ain't supposed to know nothin' important, anyhow. This perticular ring of switchmen especially. The idea, you sendin' that yard clerk in to tell me that you has a present for old Bill, an' I drop in and see you circulatin' a quart of licker around bold as you please.

"No, siree, I just can't figger it out. You're a nice, promisin' ring o' nitwits. Ought to put shop direct cards on them vacant places above your eyes. *That* yard clerk! Ain't you boys brilliant? My, my! Don't you blitherin' lunkheads know that *that* yard clerk is the master car foreman's son-in-law,

an' that us inspectors ain't given no exceptions to allow licker drinkin' on duty? Bah! You—"

And having delivered himself of his wrath, Windy Bill, veteran car inspector of Redwood yard, turned to leave the switchmen's grimy shanty, his tongue licking his lips.

"Hey, hold on, Bill," Eppy Gar, field man on the third trick shop engine caught the car inspector's elbow. "Hold on. That clerk's O.K. We bought this quart from him. He can't say a say. And we has another one just like it, with plenty time to get oiled round in before they get the engine, which has busted both injectors, back out of the house. Colder'n hell out there, Bill. Better join this sewin' circle. You must be gettin' old and skittish—"

"Well, sir, that bein' the way of it—"

Windy Bill turned back to the group on the benches around the glowing stove, a new light in his watery old eyes. It was cold outside, and soon enough he'd have to mingle with that zero temperature the entire length of an extra being made up for the west end, coupling very stiff air hose. A bleak prospect, but it could be improved upon.

The fresh quart was opened by Eppy Gar, who smelled the rim of the neck and passed it on to Bill.

"Real stuff, this, Bill. Lubricate!" Eppy invited.

Bill smelled, held the bottle in the light, lifted it to his lips, threw back his head. A long gurgle and a quarter pint passed from the bottle to Bill's innards in one inhale.

"Ah—" Bill strangled a little as he lowered the bottle and looked at the label. "I say," he gasped, "that is real stuff. Ah, Haynor — by gum— Haynor! Reminds me of this time nine year ago—"

"Here, Bill," Eppy cut in, "take another shot. Then, when this quart is passed around you can tell us—about nine years ago." Bill did take another shot. Eppy knew Bill could tell a good yarn with one drink under his belt, with two drinks a very good yarn. The quart went around, coming back to Eppy seven-eighths killed. Eppy wet his lips, passed the bottle to Bill.

"Kill 'er, Bill," he said. Bill promptly obliged.

II

Well, sir—Bill settled back on the bench, resting his big shoulders against a locker—it was nine year ago this January. I was keepin' the fire hot in my shanty. It was about one o'clock, and I was just gettin' set for a little nap when a crunchin' in the snow warned me that somebody was comin' up to the door. The latch was lifted and in walked big Pete Long, foreman of the third trick west end lead engine. Pete was muffled to the eyes, lookin' more like a bandit than a switchman. He had a newspaper under his arm.

"Mornin', Bill," says Pete, soft like, an' there was somethin' patronizin' in his tone which I didn't like. "Nice mornin', ain't it?" he said, unbuttonin' his coat. "Busy, Bill?"

"Now looky here, Pete," I says; "if you want anything chained up, we hain't got no chains; if there's any hot ones to be packed, the waste is froze up." I was just protectin' myself from havin' to go out in that blizzard. When a switchman looks up a inspector that kind of mornin' he wants somethin' done.

"Whoa, Bill," Pete says, sittin' down in my other chair, "calm yourself. All I want is counsel—advice."

Well, I thawed out quick. Back in them days the boys come to me with their troubles and their plans. I'd been here so long, an' was old enough to be a daddy to most of them.

As I say, I gave Pete welcome. He sits down in the chair an' spreads out his newspaper.

"Bill," he says, pointin' to big headlines, "have you gave this any thought?"

That was nine years ago yesterday, January 15, 1920. Remember what took place then? You don't? Well, you boys wouldn't without somebody remindin' you. Prohibition become a law. Mr. Volstead mopped up. Them big headlines spoke right out an' told all that read that after the next midnight there wouldn't be no more licker.

"They's been rumors an' hints about this happenin' for a year," says Pete, thoughtful; "but me an' Shorty an' some of the other boys ain't took it serious until to-night. Now it looks bad. What's your ideas, Bill?"

Now when Pete Long an' Shorty Burk take anything serious it's pretty bad. None of you boys knew them, did you? They left here six years ago, before the strike. You all came after. Where that pair came from they didn't say, an' where they went they said not, neither. They drifted in here in the fall of '18, an' nobody figgered they'd stay more'n one or two pay days. We was short of switchmen when they came, an' in a couple weeks they both had regular jobs. Probably that's why they stayed. Somebody said it was the first an' only regular job either of them ever had. Anyway, they stayed here better'n two year, an' when this Volstead business came up Pete was runnin' the third trick job an' Shorty was his regular field man. Them two could work miracles with a engine.

Well, I think a little before answerin' Pete. I've thought a hell of a lot about prohibition since then, but up to that time it was nothin' to give much thought to. Pete had come to me for advice so he said, and he musta had a plan perculatin' in his bean to get advice on. So I asks him what else he had on his mind besides them headlines.

"Bill," says Pete, cockin' his head to one side, "hear that wind? Hear them two goats double headin' down there on the lead with maybe six or seven cars?" I listened. The wind was moanin', an' through the sound of the wind came the pant of the strugglin' goats makin' up the extra for the west. I nodded.

"Well," continues Pete, "workin' out there in that cold is O.K. if they's a quart or two reposin' under a switchstand here an' there. But who the hell can switch cars for the next coupla months under arid conditions indicated in this here paper? It's a bad situation, Bill, an' me an' Shorty has decided somethin' has to be done about it. Shorty's handlin' the list while I circulate around an' do the heavy thinkin'. Now I got a plan—"

Pete unfolds his plan there in my shanty an' figgers me in on it as sort of host to responsibilities and other bag-holdin' features which ain't so promisin', an' which I don't accept until after Pete puts up a whale of an appealin' argument in favor thereof. In spite of Pete's argument an' the fact I liked Pete an' Shorty more'n I ever allowed myself to like any switchmen, I wouldn't of been a party to it if Pete hadn't sprung a quart of bourbon on me an' after a few drinks I got to thinkin' Pete's plan pretty rosy myself.

As I said, Pete wanted advice, an'

I gave it to him; I told him to forget about the cold, the licker, the plan he had, an', if the new law said not to drink, why not drink, but obey the law an' keep out of trouble. It was here that Pete pulled the quart on me—an' things ain't ever been just the same since, an' that was nine year ago—

"Why ain't they, Bill, and what was that plan of this here Pete's?" Eppy Gar cut in as Bill shifted his weight.

Well, sir—Bill continued from a more comfortable position—it was like this—

Sully's place was in that corner room down there across from the wye where Smith's drug store is now. In them days we all stopped at Sully's on the way to work. Switchmen, yard clerks an' car tonks wasn't supposed to come on the job with licker under their belt them days no more than they are now. But this would 'a' been a helluva place to work on a totally dry basis, an' nobody could do a real good job of railroadin' in this yard in them days without a little innard stimulant.

Big Jack Moser, the yardmaster himself, sort of set the example. Jack was always good for a quart of Sully's Haynor each night. In the winter time Sully's business more'n doubled. The usual cold weather requisition, besides Jack's quart, was three quarts to each second an' third trick crew on the job. At both ends of the yard every other switchstand covered a quart of good, fiery licker.

Well, Pete had a plan. It was the morning of the fifteenth, an' pay day. Nobody had taken the new law seriously until they found out from Sully on their way to work that afternoon an' night of the fourteenth that at midnight, the fifteenth, Sully was closin' up for keeps. Sully explained that the cost of licker would rise quick an' go high. It made all concerned feel bad, but it was Pete an' Shorty who took the aggressive an' figured somethin' should be done about it.

So Pete tells me as it's pay day, an' all the boys in a receptive mood, things would work out accordin' to his plan. Sully an' Pete had had a little talk before Pete had come to ring me in on the deal, an' Pete got down to the meat of the thing after I'd nicked his quart a few times.

"She can't miss, Bill." Pete slaps me on the back after finishin' his argument. "Whatcha think?"

III

WHAT did I think? Gorsh! What a idea Pete had! He explained that Sully had made him a proposition. They was three hundred quarts of Haynor that Sully would close out for three hundred dollars. Three hundred quarts! It was pay day; it was the last day of legal licker; it was cold; it was three months until winter would break up, an' Pete's idea was to take possession of them three hundred quarts an' deliver them to my care. It bein' pay day, a select few would contribute as much as needed, an' that select few could enjoy for the balance of the winter the fruits of their wisdom. An' Pete wanted that I take charge of the cache—that I also figger out where to put it where it would be safe.

"I'll be back before six." Pete gets up an' buttons his reefer. "An' you have the place figgered out by then. Got to get my financin' done." An' Pete leaves.

I sit back in my chair after Pete goes, an' I tell you I was kind of dizzy. I got busy figurin' where the hell to put them three hundred quarts. Pete's idea appealed to me for more reasons than one. My licker wouldn't cost me

nothin', an' I'd have the upper hand of every participatin' snake in on the deal. My job was to provide a safe place for the stuff and sort of dispense it out to them that it was due to. Just before six I has solved the problem an' Pete comes back.

"Well, William," he says, "I has the financin' all fixed. What have you been able to figger out?"

"Just the proper spot has been found," I advise Pete; "all made to order."

With that I lead Pete back in our supply room and show him my handiwork. Right when I was concentratin' the hardest on where to go with the cache, I remembers of a sudden that our supply room was built over a hollow place which the carpenters didn't think needed fillin'. While my two helpers was out fixin' up a 68, I cuts a hole about two feet square over near the side, flash my lamp down there, an' sure enough, they's plenty of space to hold the cache. I cleats the boards together an' make a lid for the hole. After sweepin' out the sawdust, I rolls a big oil drum over the lid an' the thing is done up proper.

"That's great, Bill," says Pete. "But, say—how about them helpers of yours?"

"Been givin' that some thought, Pete," I answers. "Them boys like a nip now an' then, an' I think they're O.K."

"Don't think, Bill; be sure!" Pete says, a look o' doubt crossin' his face.

I tells Pete not to worry about my helpers, an' we goes back to the stove to thrash out further details. Just as we get started to talk my two helpers come in, an' as it's 6.15, I tells them to go on home, lettin' them off forty-five minutes early. The boys was sure surprised. Pete gets down to business.

"She's a pretty complicated proposition, Bill," he begins, "an' it has to be handled just right. I got by without takin' any of the second trickers in on the deal. The fewer the simpler. They's just ten of us concerned, includin' big Jack. I was leery about takin' in Jack as he's the yardmaster, but I needed him to make up the cash an' he's sure in sympathy with the movement, comin' in for a full share of thirty quarts. I made up a switch list of the stockholders in this enterprise, an' here she is. Look it over."

Pete gave me a list. Besides big Jack, Pete had himself an' his two helpers down for ninety quart; Horseface Huggins an' his two helpers, ninety, an' Kite Doyle with his two helpers for ninety quart, takin' up the total of three hundred. I studied Pete's list, wonderin' where I was comin' in.

"Oh, you're figgered in O.K.," Pete hastens to explain when I asks about it. "You see, each of us ten donates three quarts apiece to you for your handlin' this thing fair an' square, an' for takin' care of the cache. All you gotta do, Bill, is to see to a fair an' equal distribution. We've all agreed to let you do the accountin'. You was very acceptable to all concerned. All the boys want to know is where the stuff will be kept. An' it's agreed that no one crew can get more than two quarts in any one night, an' big Jack just his one quart."

Well, sir—Windy Bill again shifted his weight and took a chew of scrap, the group waiting in silence until he had it properly seated—well, sir, I figgers for a minute an' it appears that I'm to get three more quart than the stockholders themselves. I brings this to Pete's attention.

"That's as it ought to be," says

Pete; " you're doin' all the detail work an' have responsibilities."

That made me feel pretty good. I figgers right off that I'll take care of my two helpers with five quart apiece.

Me an' Pete get the details worked out before seven, an' he beats it on down the lead just in time to catch his goat leavin' for the house. The day foreman relieves me in a few minutes an' I go home with mixed feelin's.

Well, sir, all that day I was in a sweat. As Pete said, it was a complicated proposition, an' I had responsibilities. By the time I got back on the job that night I was wishin' I hadn't been a party to it. After the rush of second trick movement, I take my two helpers to my bosom.

" Boys," I opens, " what's your honest feelin's about this bone dry business an' Mr. Volstead?"

" Ain't right. Makes America no more a free country," says Carl, my oldest helper.

" Dirty outrage," says Henry, the second helper.

" Uh-huh," says I. " Wonder if you boys would like to come in on a little deal aimed to stall off aridness for a month or so?"

They sure would! So I explained just enough to satisfy 'em, an' they agreed that five quart apiece was more than fair.

IV

About two o'clock Pete shows up at my office, a hour late.

" Everything's jake," he greets me. " The Haynor'll be here any minute, an' it has a clear board. Jack has fixed it so nothin' will be snoopin' around here. Your helpers fixed?"

" Yeah," I growls, for I'm plenty nervous.

All of a sudden I grab Pete by the arm as we stand there in the door of my place.

" What the hell is that?" I asks, for there was a clump an' rattle up the lead, like I never heard in a railroad yard.

" That's the Haynor!" Pete exclaims.

An' by all that's holy, comin' up that lead out of the dark was a horse pullin' a light wagon. Shorty Burk was drivin' the plug right up to the door. I bust out laughin'.

" Ah, gentlemen," says Shorty, " by devious ways Mr. Haynor's best and your faithful pilot has arrived behind yon noble steed. Greetings."

" Cut off the levity," orders Pete. " We have labor to perform."

Well, sir, you fellers can believe it or not, but my two helpers an' me, with Pete an' Shorty leanin' to, did labor an' plenty fast. The Haynor was done up in boxes, each holdin' ten quart. We got it down in that hole in no time. I sure did feel relieved when I got the lid over the hole an' the oil drum over the lid. We didn't take anything out of the cases as they went down in the hole, because Pete an' Shorty was both layin' off, an' so was every other regular man that could get off. It was the last day an' night of legal licker, you remember. Pete rode away with Shorty on their crazy wagon.

Maybe it was four o'clock the same mornin' when big Jack, the yardmaster, dropped in. You boys never knew big Jack? They don't make 'em any better than he was—still is, maybe, for I reckon he's in the game somewhere. He left here about the same time Pete an' Shorty migrated to more hospitable soil. Tall an' han'some was Jack. Hard, stern face, with twinklin' blue eyes. His manner was hard an' stern,

too, if he felt like anybody was shirkin'. An' Jack knew what a man could do an' expected him to do it.

"Hi, Bill," greets Jack. "Ain't been in your bunk house for an age. Bet I woke you up—"

"Woke, nothin'," I answers; "I got everything on my mind but sleep. Sure glad you come in, Jack. I want to talk to you."

"That's fine, Bill; I'll be seein' you regular every night for a spell," an' Jack winks an' chuckles. "Everything work out all right?"

"So far. But I'm nervous. Feel like I been a big chump to listen to that wayward buzzard, Pete. What you think about it, Jack?"

Well, sir, big Jack thought it was a stroke of genius on Pete's part. An' what the hell was the difference, Jack said, as long as it was correctly handled?

I feel a little better after talkin' to Jack, an' I take him back an' show him the secret works of our cache. I promises Jack that the day brothers won't know about it from me or my force.

"Oh, yeah, Bill—I almost forgot," says Jack, as he starts to go, "wanted to tell you that with prohibition now in effect, an' consignments of booze goin' through to government warehouses an' other places, the powers of this pike have concluded that it must be policed throughout, thoroughly, efficiently an' promptly. Beginnin' tomorrow, this little garden will have a bull on duty all the time. There'll be three assigned to Redwood, each on eight-hour tricks. Sort of complicates the cache, but you an' the rest of us boys are smart enough to take care of it, right under the law's eyes, eh?"

An' without givin' me time to answer, Jack fades out in the dark, chucklin' his devil-take-you chuckle an' leavin' me standin' there lookin' out in the zero cold, but sweatin' all over. Imagine, Redwood goin' to have three bulls assigned to patrol the yard regular, an' me with that counterband under my feet, an' maybe at all hours of the night have paradin' to my shanty one or more thirsty snakes, bringin' suspicion upon us all! It was a dismal situation, if you're wonderin' how I felt just then.

I guess Jack didn't figger the bulls would complicate our operations enough to matter. But me, I done some thinkin'. I'd told my two boys they'd get five quart apiece an' I decided they'd get it right then. Soon's they come in an' thaw out I explains the situation.

"Boys," I says, "I want you to get your five quarts right now, as I have a feelin' that now is the logical time for you to take it." Then I tell them about the dope on the bulls an' if the cache happens to come to their attention to remember that they don't know nothin' at all about it. As the boxes hold ten quart, we go back an' remove a case from the hole an' the boys take it home right then. I also helps myself to a couple quarts, just to be sure of that many at least.

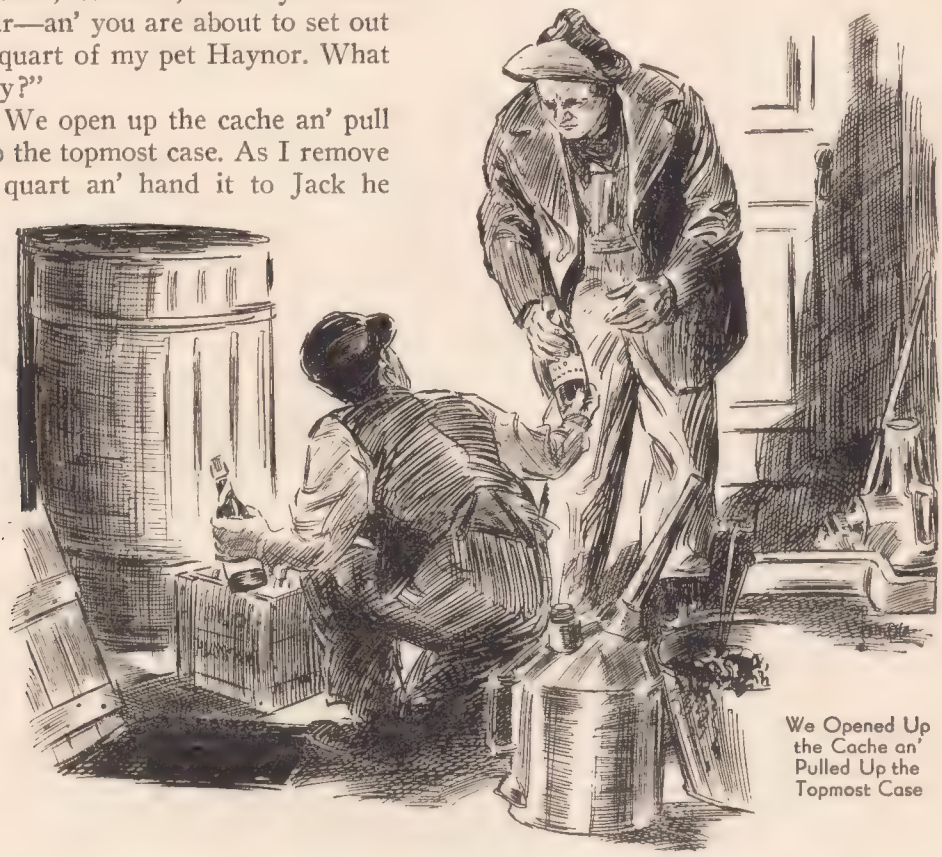
V

I DIDN'T rest so good that day, but at that I come on the job at seven, with about a pint of that Haynor doin' its stuff under my belt. I breeze in sort of expectin' a big change in things, somehow, but as I relieve the day foreman everything is as usual. Soon's the day fellers clear, I dive back to look if the oil drum was over the lid. It was, an' I laughed at my fears. It 'd been in one position for ten years, so I begin my work feelin' much better.

After the second trick rush stuff is taken care of I no sooner get set for some spot than big Jack ambles in. He shoves the bolt to, lockin' the door.

"Should always keep your door locked, William, when you tend bar—an' you are about to set out a quart of my pet Haynor. What say?"

We open up the cache an' pull up the topmost case. As I remove a quart an' hand it to Jack he seems to be in deep thought, then says:



We Opened Up the Cache an' Pulled Up the Topmost Case

"Bill, maybe I better take two or three. It might be unhandy to get it out every night, an' maybe to-morrow when I get thirsty an' drop in, there might be a bull keepin' you company."

I agreed Jack was right an' doled out three quart, Jack agreein' it would do him for three nights. An' while I had the hole open, I took out three more quart, figgerin' Pete or Shorty would show up about midnight or soon thereafter, an' of course Horseface an' Kite would drop in to be served as per agreement. Then we put back the case, put the plug over the hole an' rolled the drum back in place. Jack gets the quarts buried in his clothes an' departs for the office, an' I put the boys' three quarts in the work bench drawer. So far, great! It was workin' smooth as ice.

I always et supper at 11.30. I'd just set down an' opened my thermos kit when the door opened an' in walks a stranger. Big feller, with red face an' fat chubby fingers. "Bull," says I to myself, "circulatin' around gettin' acquainted." I lay down my sandwich an' look a question mark at the stranger—

"Howdy," he says. "I see you're

eatin'. Don't let me interrupt. Go right ahead with your meal—I'm the third trick officer on this new job, an' I come in as this is the first place I saw after relievin' the second watch, a little ways down the tracks. I'm supposed to patrol this yard an' I was never in it before. Darker'n hell out there, an' I'm lookin' for information. Mind talkin' a little while you eat?"

I studied the feller closely over bites of my supper as he asked questions. Pretty pleasant sort of a guy he seemed, but that was on the surface; down underneath I figgered him meaner'n hell, an' dirty. He'd been a deputy sheriff somewhere, he said, but got his railroad job about a month back, an' was workin' in Cleveland until they sent him down to locate at Redwood. He wanted to know how long I'd been at Redwood, an' what kind of place was it.

He said his observations of railroad employees in yard an' train service was that they resented havin' a patrolman around, an' he thought they were tough eggs. Summed up, it seemed the patrolman could get no coöperation from anybody, not even the lowly mud hop, an' did I think the employees of Redwood would be more civilized?

Civilized! That was his crack about yardmen. This bird had little gray eyes, pretty close together in his puffy face, an' they glinted kinda hard when he said "more civilized." I took it that he'd bumped into some rough treatment in Cleveland.

With the patience of Job I took pains to explain that Slab York, the day chief muddler, could recite some lines from Omar; that big Jack, the yardmaster, played tennis on Tuesday afternoons; that Horseface Huggins could play the mandolin an' squeeze organ; that Kite Doyle could recite the Shootin' of Dan McGrew, an' that Banty Shell was attendin' some day school for a hour a day tryin' to get enough education so's he'd be able to write enough words beside his own name to get promoted.

"Pretty dam' civilized, hey?" I asked him as I finished.

He squinted his little eyes an' said out of the corner of his mouth:

"Feller, you tryin' to kid somebody?"

I hastens to look hurt, because I didn't really aim to make him sore on me, an' he softens. Then he asks how is the licker feelin' in Redwood. I was swallerin' my last tin of coffee an' I damn near strangle to death. When I get back to normal I tells him I hadn't heard much about it. I don't feel so hot when he then tells me his orders is to lock up anybody caught with booze, an' he'll have full coöperation of the powers in prosecutin' an' sendin' up said culprits.

Boys, I'm tellin' you, I felt sick! Down in the pit of my stumick they was a awful feelin', an' as I heard that, my ears begin to burn an' ring, like when you got maleery, or flu. But I try to put on a poker face. Talk about holes—that was one!

That bull looks at me kinda funny, an' then he gets some directions from me about the lay of the yard, an' gets up an' buttons his coat, makin' ready to leave. I sure am relieved, an' I'm politely invitin' the officer to drop in any time when the door flies open almost under the bull's hand.

He steps back an' Shorty Burk hurdles across the doorway, comin', as I suspect in a flash, for a quart for him an' Pete. Without seein' the bull, Shorty yells out a lusty greetin'. I see in a second that he's a coupla sheets in the wind.

"Yipee, Bill! Hail! Hail! An' the gang 'll be here in a min—" Shorty busts in that way, yellin' gleeful as a college boy. Actin' without thought an' under pressure, with that bull standin' there lookin' on in open mouth surprise, I reach out an' bust Shorty right square in the mouth, settin' him down hard against the wall. Shorty looks up kinda dazed, rubbin' his chin.

"What the hell, what the hell?" he gurgles.

I leans over Shorty, actin' madder'n a wet hen.

"I'll show you 'what the hell,'" I says. "No nephew of mine can visit me on this job with licker on his breath, not when I feed that nephew. Ain't you ashamed of yourself, you weak willed heathen? Didn't you promise me—huh, didn't you?"

All the while the bull is lookin' on with interest. I steal a look at him while I shake Shorty. While I shake I think. Finally, when I figger Shorty is breathless for a while, I drop him back on the floor an' turns to the bull:

"Got to ask you to excuse me for makin' such a scene, Mr. Trent"—that was the bull's name—"You see, this is a nephew I brung up to promisin' manhood, an' it burns me up to see him in drink. Good boy, most always, but he musta been led astray by bad companions to-night. Last time he was drunk, two years ago, he promised me he wouldn't drink again... Ah, er, if you'll go now I'll give him a good private talkin' to—you know."

Trent looks hard at Shorty, who is recoverin' quick enough, nods his head an' out he goes. I bolt the door as Shorty gets to his feet. He's squintin' his eyes an' shakin' his head like a wet dog shakes. He puts his hands on his hips, sticks out his chin an' yipes:

"Again I says—what the hell?"

Well, sir, I puts my arms around Shorty's shoulders an' damn near weeps. I hated like the devil to sock him, but what else could I do? He was tanked when he came in. Now he was cold sober. I explained the whole works. After I get through, Shorty grins.

"Damn smart piece of work, Bill," he says. "Glad you knocked me sober like you did. I ain't seen Pete, as it was agreed yesterday that I'd stop in for our hooch to-night. Pete 'd raised hell if I'd mussed up the works. That's a good right you got, Bill."

While Shorty an' me is apologizin' to each other there is a racket at the door an' I open it. Horseface an' Kite is standin' there. They come in an' we all has a little heart to heart talk. I'd had enough of that cache tendin'. They left, sayin' it would be up to Pete to figger out ways an' means, an' took their quarts with 'em. I wondered after they left what the bull would think when he seen Shorty throwin' switches some place along the lead. An' he sure would see Shorty if he circulated around much.

Pete dropped in about half past four, an' big Jack was with him. My helpers had been nappin' on the desk for a hour or two, an' I got them out to fix the westbound local an' to work a 92 which was just pullin' in. Jack an' Pete are both madder'n hell, an' they start right in givin' this Trent plenty, datin' it way back to his forefathers. Trent came from a pretty nondescript family, accordin' to Jack an' Pete.

In short, they was hell to pay. Trent started right out from my place, nosin' around the yard. At three o'clock he visits the yardmaster an' damn near catches him holdin' solemn conclave with what was left in one of them

quarts of Haynor. Jack hears strange footsteps stalkin' across the yard office to his throne room, an' just has time to shove the quart down in a drawer an' gets it shut as Trent comes in, all excited.

"Mr. Moser," Trent pants, addressin' the yardmaster, "just lookee here!" An' the new sleuth sets three half filled quarts of Haynor down on the yardmaster's desk. "I saw these stickin' out from under three different switchstands in different places in this yard. What do you think of that?" Trent puffs out his chest as he points to bottles which had been the prop'ty of three well-meanin' switch crews.

Big Jack looks up at Trent, then at the bottles, then rubs his eyes, suckin' in a long breath.

"Ahem, ahem, ahem," was all Jack could get out for a minute. He was jarred out of the rest of his night's sleep, an' clear out of ideas that would prompt a good answer. But Jack had to say something besides "ahem."

"You say they was under switchstands?" Jack stalled. "Well, well. My goodness, this is shocking. Just what switchstands?"

Trent looked at a car card on the back of which he'd wrote some figgers, Jack explained.

"What switchstands?" Trent repeated after Jack. "Why, No. 12 at the west end, No. 5 at the east end, an' No. 2 at the rip track lead," Trent goes on, referrin' to the card. Jack frowns an' seems to be thinkin' deep. Then he answers Trent:

"Very strange, old sleuth; very, very strange—and it is dark out there. I can't account for it, or for how you happened to see them, it bein' so dark. Sure they was under the stands?" Jack is playin' for time to let inspiration percolate.

"Dark?" muses Trent. "What the hell? I got a flash light, ain't I? An' the stands are numbered. I *know* where I found this licker."

An' Trent then becomes zealous about runnin' down the owners of the licker. He gives big Jack the dope about his orders regardin' same, about like he did me. Jack finally tells Trent that in his opinion the licker came under the switchstands at the hands of the hunky section men the day before, an' they forgot to take it with them when they got off the job. Trent tells Jack he is a hell of a fine deducer if he figgers hunkies is goin' to forget their hooch, an' promises to camp on somebody's trail till he runs the clews down to them that's violatin' the Federal law an' company rules. Jack waits until Trent goes, then hustles out, finds Pete, an' they come to talk it over with me. When Jack gets through tellin' about Trent comin' to him with the evidence of booze on the job, Pete opens up, describin' for Jack's benefit the scene Shorty an' me put on in front of Trent, Shorty havin' give it to him just like it happened.

"Hell of a note," Pete went on. "Things is gettin' rocky. We are in the shop tracks, an' I'm goin' back to the end of the string of O.K.'s with Shorty, helpin' him make the couplin's, when we hear somebody comin' around the end of the track. We're blinded by a flash light. The light shifts from me to Shorty, an' it plays on Shorty's map plenty long. I kinda wilt, an' Shorty ain't feelin' none too cocky.

"The bull steps into the circle of light our lamps make an' looks down at Shorty.

"'Seems like we met before,' he says. 'You're the car inspector's visitin' nephew, ain't you?'

"'Yeh,' Shorty answers without hesitatin', 'I'm one of Bill's nephews, if that's the inspector you mean; but I don't get you on the visitin' business—I'm kinda regular. Maybe you met my *twin*. He goes in to see Bill now an' then; but I don't. Me an' Bill hate each other.'

"With that the bull grunts. He flashes his light again on Shorty's map, then says:

"'Twin, eh? Remarkable resemblance. Hum, hum. Mule kick you in the face this evenin', twin?'

"Shorty winces an' feels his lips, which are still plenty thick from Bill's sock. 'Mule?' counters Shorty. 'Whatcha mean, mule? If you're referrin' to my marked pan, be advised, feller, that I fell off the back footboard an' cracked my face on a rail. Damn near put me out.'

"'Oh!' says the bull. 'Reckon that would *shake* you up,' an' he emphasized the shake, plenty. Then he snaps off his light an' starts away. After takin' a few steps, he stops an' turns back, an' chuckles a mean, sarcastic chuckle. An' I have a feelin' happenin's are in the makin'."

"You Say They Was Under the Switchstands?" Jack Stalled. "Well, Well. My Goodness!"

Pete finishes his story an' we three sit there in silence an' deep concentration. Big Jack is downright mad, Pete is blue, an' me—boys, I'm tellin' you—I felt like I was just gettin' disrobed to step into a tank of boilin' water. That twin business made things awful bad. It threw me under suspicion, an' you know how it is when suspicion rests on you.

We talk about the cache, an' I insists that it be taken from my care immediately, if not sooner.

"Well," says big Jack, "I don't blame Bill for wantin' to be rid of the stuff. Things are complicated now. But we have three hundred dollars invested, an' no snoopin' bull should scare us out. What do you think, Pete?"

"Me?" Pete grins. "Bill is a family man, gettin' old. You're an official of good standing, Jack. Shorty an' me has been here—too long. If it could be done right now, I'd say we move the Haynor to Shorty's locker an' mine, an' what don't go in, Kite an' Horseface 'll have to care for."

That makes me feel better, an' is plenty hunky dory by me. Jack tells Pete he is a good guy, but shouldn't hold all the sack, an' just then Kite an' Horseface tramp into the office, an' they're foamin'.

"Some thievin' so an' so has glommed our quart from under No. 12 stand," Horseface bawls, "an' also Kite's quart has vanished from No. 5 at the other end. What is this place comin' to? We has come for more Haynor for our breakfast shot. An' if we ever catches the son of a—"

We explains the happenin's of the night, of which Horseface an' Kite don't know about. They are shocked beyond expression, an' they make promises to do somethin' to Trent when he happens to get in their way. Finally it is agreed between all parties that the cache goes as Pete suggests, an' is to be moved at three o'clock the next mornin', all hands takin' part in the transfer. Jack says he'll have Trent occupied in some way in order to keep him in the clear.

It's almost seven by this time, an' my helpers has their work finished. The day brothers relieve us an' we go home.

Funny how crusty day men are to the night men, ain't it? That day foreman an' me was just barely on speakin' terms.

VI

Well, sir, I go on home, an' somehow put in a pretty good day's sleep. I get back on the job that night an' learn that things has happened—lots of things, strange things, tragic things, yet damn funny.

I'm surprised to find instead of relievin' crusty old Dan Coffee, the day foreman, Elmer Snod, from the shops, is there in his place.

"What the hell, Elmer?" I asks.

"Plenty," Elmer says. Then I get the shock of my life. Elmer tells me that Dan is in jail, an' both his day helpers along with him.

"I don't know of any place more fittin' to Dan," I says; "but how come?"

Well, I ain't prepared for what Elmer relates. This is what happened: Trent, the third trick bull, meets his relief, the first trick sleuther, an' tells him of the night's happenin's. They both decide a sweepin' investigation about the licker should be made. Trent agrees to go right into it on their own, workin' together. They go over the ground snoopin', an' decide to investigate our shanty first.

They mosey down an' soft foot it up to the door, which is half open. They stick their heads in, an' what they see is very gratifyin' to their ambitions.

Dan is holdin' a quart of Haynor up in the sunlight which is comin' through the back room window, an' both his helpers is there holdin' similar bottles. They watch while Dan breaks the seal on his quart an' takes a snifter, passin' it on to his boys. They each gurgle a little. The sleuths

pounce in on them three car tonks like bass after frogs.

"You guys are under arrest," Trent an' his partner informs the day brothers.

They protest their innocence, but it don't do no good. The evidence is there a plenty. Before ridin' the boys they wait until the shop can send Elmer an' a couple others over to fill the vacancy.

Dan tells Elmer, with tears in his eyes, that he was innocent as could be. Elmer explains to me that Dan an' his helpers is refillin' the waste drum when Dan notices it ain't where it used to be. Dan also sees marks on the floor indicatin' that the drum has been moved back an' forth. He gets curious an' investigates. He is certainly surprised to see a trap door where there didn't use to be one. He pulls up my lid an' damn near faints when he sees all that licker. They simply wanted to see what the stuff was like, an' takes a sample. Then the bulls pounce in on 'em. They tell all this to the bulls, but it don't do no good, an' three good car inspectors are reposin' in jail, charged with possession, conspiracy, an' Lord knows what else.

Boys, it was funny. I tells Elmer that such men are a disgrace to the company an' society. He says that Morgan, the master foreman, thought the same, an' discharged all three before they went to jail. The bulls rides our cache along with Dan an' his helpers as evidence. That ended my worries about the licker. Then I get sorry for Dan.

Jack comes in after a while, an' he knows all about it. Dan don't mean anything to him, but he is madder'n hell about the loss, an' swears that we each has a pledge to make to get this bozo Trent good an' proper. When Pete an' Shorty show up about midnight, they get a good laugh out of it, even if they are sore about losin' the stock. I'm insistin' that we do somethin' for the boys in jail, an' Pete promises they will be taken care of. He an' Shorty will fix that, an' they also are lookin' for a way to fix Trent. So the night passes, with everybody on the job discussin' the situation, an' Mr. Trent migratin' around with his chest out.

Course, Trent had done a fancy piece of work, in his opinion, an' probably his superior told him he was the huckleberries. Anyway, he was bubblin' over with authority an' zeal. He come in to see me between three an' four o'clock an' wants to know where my nephew lives. He's checkin' up on Shorty's story.

"Which one?" I asks.

"Which one?" he says. "You know which one—that one that was drunk last night!"

"Oh," says I, "that's a puzzle. I have several nephews. From reports I got yesterday they was all drunk—all but one. He's the twin of the one you saw here last night."

Mr. Trent then gets tough an' I get tough along with him. After we exchange a few hot remarks he gets up an' says:

"Listen, you—I'm on to you. I think you're in on this licker thing. You think you're smart, but lemme tell you somethin'—you're too damn big to be a fox, see? I'm gonna get you!"

With that Trent stalks out an' slams the door. I join Jack and the others in sentiment. Mr. Trent should find cause to leave Redwood.

VII

All that day I try to think of a good way to erase Trent from our

happy sphere. But I'm dull, can't see how to do it. My rest is broken up. I heard Dan an' his helpers had got out on bond after bein' in jail all day.

I get back to work that night, plenty tired. There's a load attached to bein' a suspicious character, an' I feel like hell. I no sooner get on the job than big Jack sends a yard clerk to tell me he wants to see me. I drags clear up to the other end to see what Jack wants. Jack takes me in his office an' shuts the door.

"Bill," says Jack, "this Trent is too ambitious. They must be a showdown. He come in here last night an' virtually tells me that I—I, the yardmaster of this yard, I, the czar—look suspicious to him; that he thinks I drink on duty, an' that he's gonna get me. I damn near crown him, but I let it go, then. However, that can't pass. Showdown's in order, Bill. Now I have a plan, but it needs your help. What say?"

"Jack," I answers, "that guy has broke up my rest all day. He tells me the same thing last night. I coöperate. Anything short of murder."

"Good!" Jack says, pattin' my shoulder. "It won't be murder, Bill, but just a little short of it. Now lookee—" Jack shoved the consist book under my nose.

"This 69," Jack says, "is figgered in at 11.30. They got a tank of wine for St. Louis. Now, Bill, you have got to work this 69 an' find cause to shop this tank car. It is the bull's orders that when a car of booze comes in he's got to stay with it till it goes out again. You shop this car an' I'll have Pete set it on the head end of rip track number one, where you go to make immediate repairs. The bull will camp with the car. What happens will happen accordin' to the way I figger things out. I don't know just yet what will happen."

I grins over the desk at Jack. A lot of pleasant situations the bull might be thrown in jumps across my imagination. "O.K., Jack," I says. Then Jack pulls out of a drawer his lone remainin' quart.

"This is the last of a long line of Haynor, Bill," he says, "thanks to Trent." We both take a big shot, an' I perk up a lot. Goin' back to my office, I tingle all over with anticipation, feelin' that there is to be more happenin's. They was, but they was all beyond my ability to foresee. An' beyond other abilities to see, includin' big Jack's an' Pete's. Also one Trent, ambitious sleuth, went down in the suction.

VIII

The 69 comes in at midnight. I goes out with my two boys to look her over. My boys are surprised. I directs them to start at the rear end, while I work down from the head end. They plant the blue light at the head end an' go on back. I'm wishin' I could 'a' seen Jack again to get more dope, but I know what to do, up to a certain point. The tank is about ten cars back, an' there I stop. I expected to see Trent hangin' round, but he ain't there yet. So I crawls under an' I'm disconnectin' a brake beam when feet tramp up an' stop.

"Hey, there," a man yells, an' it's Trent; "is this that tank of wine?"

I growls back that it is a tank all right, but I don't know nothin' about wine.

"This is a tank of wine," says Trent, "an' I'm guardin' it. What are you doin' under there?"

I don't answer as I'm in a hurry to get the beam down. Trent insists on

a answer, an' as I have one side of the beam disconnected, I crawls out.

"Oh," Trent says, lookin' at me behind his flash, "it's the uncle of nephews, ain't it? What you doin'?"

I throw my own light in Trent's face, his tone makin' me mad.

"In addition to tellin' you to go jump off a bridge," I barks, "I might tell you that this tank is in bad order an' has to be shopped. Guard it an' be hanged." I tacks on a shop card an' leaves Trent slobberin' mad.

I ambles on back an' meets my boys. I tells them to work the rest of the train up to the tank.

The boys are through workin' the train at 12.40. At 12.45 Pete couples on with the goat. Big Jack is with the crew an' I step out on the lead to watch 'em pull out the head end. The moon is big an' bright, they ain't no wind, an' it's a heap warmer than the past few nights. Pete an' his pin man, with big Jack, is standin' near the pilot of the goat. They get a signal from Shorty, who has gone back to make a cut, an' the goat snorts into backward motion, goin' out slow an' easy.

The tank comes up to Pete an' Jack, an' Trent unloads.

"That tank of wine is a shopper, Mr. Yardmaster," says Trent. "Are you goin' to get it fixed?"

Jack an' Pete don't seem to hear. They watch the tags on the cars rollin' by for maybe ten more car lengths, then Pete wags the head end to stop, as he wants to make another cut, which he does an' signals again to back 'em up. The head man is standin' at No. 1 switch, takin' Pete's signals. Pete an' Jack walk on across to the lead without payin' any attention to Trent. I gets a good look at their faces, an' I'm tellin' you, they look pretty tough. Trent follows 'em over.

"I want to know," he demands as Pete throws No. 6, "what are you goin' to do with that bad order tank?"

"Ask the yardmaster," snaps Pete, givin' a kick signal.

Trent questions Jack, who is standin' right there at the switchstand. The bull is assumin' a grand pose, somethin' like Napoleon, with one foot on the outside rail, the other square in the middle of the lead tracks. Jack answers him, talkin' through a evil grin.

"Just stand that way another second, Nicky Carter, an' you won't be interested in that tank."

Instinct must 'a' warned Trent. The pin man had cut off five with a lusty kick. Down the lead they rolled at a good clip. Trent looked up. With a screech he jumped. High in the air he went, lightin' astradle of big Jack, an' they both hit the ground a ton.

I thinks Jack is goin' to start a fight, judgin' from the mean look of him when he gets up, but he just stands off an' looks at Trent. Trent is mad. Bellerin' like a wild bull. Trent again wants to know about the tank.

"If the tank is a shopper," says Jack, "we'll put it on the rip an' Bill here can fix it. Can you, Bill?"

"Yep," I says, "I can."

"Pete," Jack orders, "drop that tank down in No. 4, an' when you bust up the rest of that 69, set it in on the head end of rip No. 1," then turnin' to me:

"When it's set, Bill, fix the beam an' let me know when you're through."

Then big Jack walks away, as cool as you please. I tells Pete to let me know when he's ready an' I'll ride with them to the rip.

IX

I GETS on the front footboard with Shorty an' Pete when they are ready

with the tank. The pin man is in the cab, an' Trent is ridin' on his tank of booze. The feelin' that somethin' awful is about to happen is stronger than ever. I asks Pete what the play is, but I don't find out much. Pete tells me all I gotta do is tinker around the beam an' keep talkin' to Trent.

It's about three o'clock when they get the car set an' leave me an' Trent to keep each other company. I crawls underneath. Trent stands right where my feet are stickin' out. I take my time, all the while askin' Trent questions about everything I can think of. He keeps answerin', an' now an' then askin' some himself. I gets the beam connected, an' ain't doin' a damn thing but layin' there on the ground, holdin' a conversation with the bull. Once in a while I tap the side of a wheel, or take a sock at the beam with a wrench. I'm about ready to crawl out when unnatural noises make me cringe.

Yes, sir, cringe. They is a short scuffle of feet, then a gaspin', stranglin' sort of whimper, a thud, an' then some more scurryin' of feet. I lay there in a cold sweat, wonderin' what happened.

"Come on out, Bill," a hoarse whisper greets my ear. "Everything's jake."

That whisper sure relieved me, as it was friendly. I snakes out from under the car an' gets the surprise of my life. There, standin' around me, is a sort of reunion. Horseface Huggins, grinnin' like a ape, Kite Doyle, lickin' his fat lips, Pete, Shorty an' Jack.

"What the hell?" I gasps.

"Board of restitution," pipes up Shorty. "We are about to go in executive session. Jack is the chairman."

"Where is Nicholas Carter?" I asks Jack, an' I'm informed that he is restin' easy over by the tool house, a gunny sack over his head, hands an' feet tied together, clear out of earshot. Big Jack laughs a nasty laugh, an' I know he has drunk all they was left of his Haynor.

"Know how to tap a tank, Bill?" Jack asks, plenty reckless.

"Yeh," I says.

"Well, then—tap 'er, Bill, tap 'er," he orders. I crawls back under the tank an' opens the valve just enough to give a nice gentle flow. When I crawl back out I'm amazed to see that out of nowhere has come at least a dozen new shiny water cans.

In no time them cans are full. Before they all get filled, though, each of us has a long sample of what we're gettin'. Talk about power—that stuff was hundred proof! With one drink I know it ain't the stuff I can handle, but the others! They thought they could handle anything made to drink. Right now I see what mighta been a party of restitution was developin' into somethin' awful to behold. Out from under the tank comes Shorty's voice in high glee:

"Hi-yi, fellers, come under an' bathe. Why use a can?"

Well, sir, the yardmaster an' his three foremen reach down an' drag Shorty out from under. He is a sight to make angels tremble. Talk about drunk! I think it's time to shut off the flow, an' I broaches the subject to Jack. He throws back his head an' laughs plenty loud.

"Shut off? Shut off? Whatcha think you are, Bill, a engineer?" Jack is about in the hiccup state. "No, William, we has a duty to perform *in re* Nicky Carter, the dry sleuth, who languishes yonder." An' sayin' which, big Jack snaps erect an' claps his hands together, like a stage Hindu.

"My trusty slaves — go and fetch yon recumbent scavenger of caches. Hie you back here with him, and deposit him at your master's noble trilbys, go!"

The four "slaves" stagger over to the tool house. I asks Jack what he aims to do with Trent.

"Patience, William," Jack says. "You shall not witness neither murder nor mayhem — but the demonstration of the workin's of a master mind."

As long as they don't kill Trent, I don't give a tinker's damn. So I sit down to watch. Boys, I'm tellin' you, I witnessed a strange thing when they laid Trent at big Jack's feet. They wasn't no noise but the scufflin' of feet, an' when that stopped, the silence was awful. Jack broke in with his voice cast hollow an' ghosty—he mustn't been as drunk as I figgered he was.

"One Trent—first name unknown"—Jack's voice boomed out—"you are about to hear your death warrant. In a little while you start upon a journey into the mysterious sphere of death. But regret that not—hic. You shall welcome death as sweet relief. It is decreed that you shall—hic—die by the knife. You have monkeyed, and having monkeyed, shall be monkeyed with—hic—by each and every one your monkeyin' has injured. You may have a moment to reflect before the knife descends, also to make one request—"

I'm tremblin' like a leaf, unable to move.

"Executioners," Jack booms on, "roll gunny sack up to eyes, there bind it tight, so the prisoner may speak, yet see nothing."

Pete an' Shorty follow the order.

"Hand me the knife," says Jack. "Prisoner, make your request."

Trent is squirmin' an' whimperin'. But he's tied pretty tight an' can't break loose.

"Oh, Lord, Lord, have mercy on me," Trent moans.

"Is that your last request?" asks Jack. "Want nothing more solid than mercy?"

"A drink," Trent says faintly.

"A drink," booms Jack. "Hold up the prisoner's head."

Shorty an' Pete bring Trent to a sittin' position. Jack pours a can lid clear full down Trent's throat. Some of it spills on Trent's coat.

"You didn't get full measure," Jack says, an' he ain't hiccupin' any more, I notice. Jack lams another lid full down Trent. Not much spills that time, but Jack says most all of it spilled, an' gives Trent another measure. By that time Trent has drunk almost a pint.

"That 'll be enough," says Jack. An' Trent is laid back on the ground. "Now, the knife—where the hell did I put the knife?"

Jack tiptoes away from Trent, an' motions us all to him.

"Horseface," Jack whispers when we are all around him, "you an' Kite an' Shorty get them cans away from here, while Pete an' Bill help me finish this. Don't give a damn where you go or what you do, but beat it."

They gather up the cans, makin' plenty of noise, an' vanish, leavin' only one can with Jack. Trent is layin' there quiet like. Jack whispers to us to make enough noise for the whole gang while he finishes Trent. He goes back to Trent an' we tramp around near Trent's head.

"The knife vanished," Jack says in his ghost voice. "We have sent for another. You can't die till we have a knife. Want another drink while you wait?" Trent did.

Jack poured another pint down that bull, an' pours a lot over Trent's front. By this time Trent don't give a damn whether he dies or not. Jack cuts his bonds an' he don't even know he's loose.

Jack motions us to foller him, an' when we get out of earshot he tells us to wait there while he goes back an' talks to Trent. At a signal he is to call out "Everybody beat it, somebody is comin'," an' we are to run up, do a lot of jumpin' around, then run off again, wait a second an' run up, but to let Jack do all the talkin'.

Jack goes back an' talks to Trent. He unfastens the bandage as he talks, but Trent don't know it. That poor devil is layin' there on the ground, at death's door, tryin' to whistle. Jack yelps as he said he would, an' we do our stuff as agreed. We run up, make a lot of scufflin' noises, like somebody gettin' away in a hurry, an' Jack pulls off Trent's bandage as he runs away on our heels. We circle, then, an' trot up to where Trent is layin'. Big Jack stoops over him, throwin' my light in his face. Trent is layin' there blinkin' an' grinnin' like any fool.

"Hiya," he says, thick as molasses.

"Hiya, hell," bellers Jack in his natural voice. "What's the meanin' of all this? Hey! Hey! What do you mean, feller? Explain this!"

I musta been pretty dumb all the while the killin' business was goin' on, as I didn't tumble till right then what Jack had planned. It dawned on me all of a sudden as I hear Jack askin' the bull to explain. I'm gettin' plenty kick out of the situation now.

Jack shouts a few more "explains" at the bull. He just looks at Jack, an' says:

"'Splain, 'splain — howsahell dead man 'splain? Go 'way! Dead men 'splain nothin'. Us dead keep our sekrets. 'Splain yoursel'." Dead drunk!

Jack is laughin' out loud, an' so's me an' Pete. I cut the flow on the valve down to just a dribble, we move Trent up under the car an' leave him to himself. I'm feelin' it is a nice endin' to a busy night, an' so's Pete an' Jack. But it's lacked a hell of a lot of bein' the endin'.

Jack asks me to go to the yard office an' call the night police captain over in town an' tell him that he should ought to come to Redwood in a hurry, as Mr. Trent needs a little help. I goes.

X

Boys, I'm plenty surprised when I get to the yard office. The yard clerks are all as drunk as Trent was, an' there on the chief's desk is one of them water cans, just about drained. I calls Trent's boss. Then I go out lookin' for Jack.

When I find Jack I finds another mess, much worse. There in No. 7 track is three yard engines coupled together, an' around them goats is a fine big party, in the middle of which is Jack himself, wavin' a water can above his head, while the crews of each engine is singin', laughin' an' raisin' plenty hell. Big Jack is drunk as the rest of them. I holds my head in my hands in horror as I'm cold sober by this time. No yardmaster can have three engines on the spot at once, the entire crew of his yard rip roarin' drunk, himself leadin' 'em in song, an' be yardmaster next day. No, sir, not even at Redwood in them days.

I starts into that drunken mob to try an' get Jack to pull himself together, but I only take one step. I sees the general yardmaster, himself, walk right up. Yes, sir, Ted Beeman. The

terminal dispatcher, not bein' able to raise a soul on the phone, musta notified Beeman that something was allfired wrong at Redwood, an' Beeman comes out to see for himself.

three engineers, an' nine switchmen trail Jack across the lead an' out on the road leadin' to town.

I am amazed, an' so is Beeman. Without sayin' a word to me as I stand

"'Splain!" Mumbles the Bull. "Howsh Dead Men 'Splain. Us Dead Men Keep Our Sekretsh"

That mob quiets when Beeman announces himself. What he says is plenty. Then he breaks up that party in a snarlin' rage. Every man jack is told they is fired right then an' there. He tells them to get off company prop'ty.

None of the gang seemed to give a hoot. They was silent while Beeman talked, but when he's through, big Jack waves his can an' yells:

"Three cheers for the boss—everybody cheer."

Believe it or not, they cheer as much as they can, then Jack yelps for everybody to foller him, an' three firemen,

there in open-mouth awe, he gets in the goats, works the injectors of each, then goes to the yard office an' takes charge. Things was in a hell of a mess, but Beeman got plenty of help on the way to Redwood in no time.

Durin' this excitement, which consumes the better part of a hour, I almost forgets Trent. I'm almost to my office when I'm accosted by a stranger up the lead. He tells me he's the police captain, an' wants to know if I know about somebody sendin' for him to help the yard patrolman handle a troublesome situation.

I tells him it must 'a' been a phony

call, as they was no trouble I knows of, an' that the patrolman was guardin' a tank of wine. Then I tells him where he should ought to find the tank. He says it's damn funny about the call, thanks me an' goes on toward the rips.

I gets on in the office to see if my boys are drunks, too, but no, they're sleepin' like angels, an' I don't disturb 'em. Not wantin' to miss anything the captain might do, I hotfoot it to the neighborhood of the yard office, as the phone is there, an' I suspect the captain will want to use it.

I was right. He come along pretty soon, almost draggin' Mr. Trent with him. He lets loose of Trent at the office door, an' that bull just sinks down in the cinders. I mosey in after the captain an' hear him call the district police station, which is only about fifteen minutes away for a fast patrol buggy. I wait around till the wagon comes, an' then watch two husky officers help the captain load Trent in.

"What is the charge?" asks one of the coppers as they is ready to go.

"Robbing a car in interstate movement," says Trent's boss. "The company will prosecute the case." Then the wagon rolled away an' I hear the captain askin' Beeman, who is also a spectator of Trent's abdication, what he thinks of that kind of a officer. Beeman answered that he had plenty other things to think about.

Well, sir, that was the last of Trent. He got some kinda sentence. It was the last of big Jack, an' Pete an' Shorty, too. I ain't seen them since. But the others all got their jobs back. Beeman was pretty white an' square down underneath, an' after lettin' the boys loaf a month, gave them back their jobs. All but the engine crews lost out in the strike, but all the same, they got regular jobs on the Belt, now.

Old Dan an' his helpers got put back on, too. Pete an' Shorty was goin' to fix it with Morgan, but they forgot all about it. The longer Dan an' his helpers was off, the more I thought about it—so one day I goes to Morgan an' confesses.

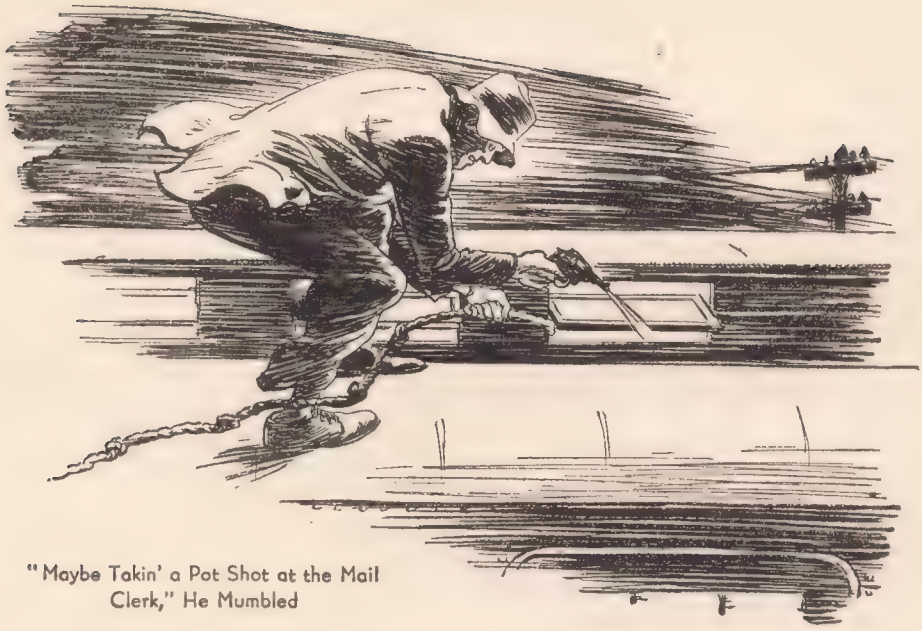
I'm lookin' to be fired, but Morgan don't fire me at all.

"Bill," he says, "you have done a noble thing, an' I'm goin' to keep you on. Also put Dan on. Dan's lost ten days' pay, but that's penalty for drinkin' on duty."

"Now," Windy Bill got up and stretched, the others rising also, as the switcher pulled up and stopped on the lead. "you boys is the first to have heard that story, an' don't forget it's in confidence. If you happens to get thirsty when they is a tank of wine sittin' around, remember, an' run to the pump an' draw out a long drink of water! You'll be workin' days ahead."

PENNSYLVANIA BREAKS RECORD

DURING March the Pennsylvania Railroad broke all records for passenger train service on its Atlantic Division. 99.10 per cent of all trains made schedule time, and 98.25 per cent made an on-time performance. During the same time its subsidiary, the Long Island Railroad, recorded that 99.9 per cent of all regularly-scheduled trains were operated on time. 27,277 trains were scheduled.



"Maybe Takin' a Pot Shot at the Mail Clerk," He Mumbled

Mail Pirate

The Bull Hunted Down the Shadow in the Blinds Only to Face a Mad Killer's Gun

By Russel Hays

BELL tolling softly, the 7.20 northbound passenger train glided impatiently away from the brightly lighted King City depot platform. Steam spewed from the cylinder cocks at the start. The giant headlight sent a silver shaft through the onyx night. At the right of the maze of freight yard tracks Ed Nevius, special officer for the D. & E., stood in the shadow of the freight house, pulling on his gloves with a certain grim purposefulness.

"So you're going to ride 'er out, are you?" he muttered under his breath, lynx eyes marking the vague form which crept through the shadows of a line of sidetracked express cars.

The dim figure had left off creeping now—was running down the side of the cars. Coming to the end of them, he crouched beneath the coupler as he waited for the tender of the outbound locomotive to pull abreast of him. A dozen quick steps and he would be swinging up into the blinds. The corner of Nevius's wide mouth twitched in a mirthless smile as he slithered away from the freight house, the sound of his approach buried in the swelling thunder of the nearing train.

He'd nail this bird easy, he was thinking. Let him grab the blinds, then pinch him. A hard man, Nevius. Twenty years he'd been working for the D. & E. A man who could be trusted to follow out the letter of the law with utter disregard for his own feelings or sympathies. Yes, a fine bull was Nevius. He'd get his man. He always had.

He was one track over from the express cars, was stealing forward with quick cat-like steps, eyes intent on the man who crouched beneath the coupler. It would be easy enough to catch the blinds after him from here. The locomotive was even with the end of the sidetracked cars, was forging on faster and faster. The bo left his hiding place, darted toward the onrushing tender. Nevius sprang after him.

For a moment, as the latter reached for the bar at the rear of the tender, his thin, broad shouldered body moved across the path of a light high up on the side of the freight house. His gaunt and furtive face was etched with cameo distinctness against the grimy backdrop of the blinds. A common enough face in many respects, a bit hawkish, tight lipped. Yet pale, almost to chalkishness, beneath the smudged stubble of blond beard. And, too, there was about the slitted eyes something of ruthlessness, of passionless cunning.

Nevius should have, in the line of duty, immediately collared the fellow and turned him over to police headquarters for identification. There are often rewards out for men with faces like this one's, especially when they are in such a big hurry to get somewhere. The detective, however, did nothing of the sort. One might have suspected out of discretion, had they not known of his record. Or had one not seen his face.

The grimness had all drained out of it in that flashing instant. Leaving it older, puzzled, strangely contorted. His thick jowls hung loosely, slack folds of flesh, and in his cold, gray eyes was such a look of indecision as could be nothing short of anguish.

"Dan—" he whispered. And then again, more hoarsely, "Dan—somehow—must have got away!"

Adkins it was, beyond question. The brakeman who had gone bad, who had been one of the gang which had held up the Midnight Express three years before. He'd been given life for that job. But here he was, riding out the 7.20 northbound! Nevius knew his duty all right. Guessed that Adkins must somehow have escaped from the State penitentiary. Knew that he should be turned over to the police. Knew—well, that was the hell of it—there were other things Nevius knew. Nevius, the bull, who never let sentiment interfere with duty.

So he stood there now in the middle of the siding, knees irresolute beneath him. Duty urging him forward. And something else holding him back. It was torture for Nevius, who had always blindly followed the not-so-easy path laid down by those higher up. He felt a little dizzy from the suddenness of it all. Rubbed the greasy palm of his glove uncertainly against his thick neck. Too late now, anyhow! The blinds had slid on past him.

He stared after the engine wonderingly, agitatedly. What was getting into him? He shouldn't have done a thing like this! Twenty years of unquestioning obedience told him he was acting the fool; a weak-hearted fool. Letting Adkins escape was bad enough. But supposing the ex-brakeman were planning on sticking up a mail car? He'd helped to do it once before. Three

years in the stir, with life there ahead of him, didn't sweeten a man. Nevius set his jaw, moved forward, stopped.

He watched the baggage cars speed by, yellow light shining through the tiny panes in the doors. The day coaches, tired passengers sprawled drowsily in their seats, passed before him. They might have been a thousand miles away for all of him. Puppets on a northward sliding stage. There was old Pop Woodward, the conductor, punching tickets. He'd been a good friend of Adkins's too, back in the old days.

Nevius gazed unseeingly through the screened windows of the Pullmans. If he really thought Dan would be trying another holdup, he promised himself, he'd pull him off yet. He could do it. The train was slowing now as the engineer made a running test of his brakes. The trouble was, Nevius had no idea what Adkins was intending. He was no nearer a decision than he had been before. The rear of the observation car was almost up with him. He'd have to make up his mind quickly, that was a sure thing. No, he wouldn't either! He could ride the cushions out to Multnomah and catch Adkins out there just as well.

"Guess I can make that observation step," he muttered doubtfully.

He sprinted up the tracks, arms outstretched toward the side of the train. A glance back showed him the handhold at the end of the car gaining on him. It was a scant foot away. Gloved fingers closed on it. Nevius's big body was hurled back against the grilled rail of the platform. His fumbling toe found a step. He drew a deep breath.

A loving couple, seated closely in chairs at the farther side of the observation platform, eyed him distrustfully as he climbed over the railing.

He strode on past them and into the car. Continuing on through it and the Pullmans ahead, he came eventually to Pop Woodward, who was still taking up tickets in the first day coach.

"Hello, Ed, what's on your mind?" said Pop.

"Aw, these dirty bums—always up to somethin'," grunted Nevius.

"One of 'em put it over on you?"

"Yeh, I think so. Some crazy kid. You remember—" For a second Nevius was tempted to tell Pop who it really was was riding the blinds. Pop had a level head. The only trouble was, he was gabby, talked too much. A thing like this wouldn't do anybody any good if it got out.

"Remember what?" asked Pop, peering over the silver rims of his spectacles.

"Nothin'," said Nevius shortly. "I was just thinkin'. In case you get done punchin' tickets this side of Multnomah, I'll be settin' up in the smoker."

"Won't be through, Ed; sorry," said Pop, moving on his way.

Nevius ambled on down the aisle to the smoker, picked an empty seat and hunched his heavy frame wearily in it. His gray eyes stared fixedly out the window, seeming to count the long lines of street lights paralleling the hill back of King City. Nevius, however, was not even aware of the lights. For the moment his thoughts delved into the past, twenty years ago when he and Dan Adkins first started working for the D. & E.

He'd known even then that Dan wasn't above picking up an odd penny in ways that weren't quite lawful. Adkins and he had roomed together, buddied together. The one irresponsible, generous, and wise-cracking—the other sober, methodical, painfully honest. An ill-matched pair, you'd say.

Perhaps that was why they had drifted apart as the years rolled by; drifted apart, yet were still held by an invisible tie of understanding.

Adkins, with love for the main line, stayed a brakeman. Nevius had turned to the work of a special officer. He'd known all about the dame that had started Dan on the downhill slide five years before. He had known and had sympathized. Dan had given him the whole story one night. He was half drunk at the time. Nevius had tried to get him to pull himself together. What the hell difference does it make, asked Dan disconsolately. Well, it had made a plenty! Too much booze had got him blacklisted.

II

NEVIUS had seen him hanging around the yards the night of the Express holdup. He'd suspected Dan might have been in on it, and, knowing Adkins as well as he did, hadn't had much trouble in tracking him down and getting the goods on him. There had been three others in the gang—gunmen. Dan hadn't been anything but a dupe. At the time, Nevius had been tempted to let him make a getaway.

He'd told himself that a seven or eight year stretch would stiffen Adkins up. Make a man of him again. He told Dan so while he was taking him into headquarters. Dan had admitted that he was probably right. Neither had suspected that a clever lawyer and a perjured witness would be able to hang the murder on him. Adkins had been up in the cab of the engine at the time. Nevius had wished then, when it was too late, that he'd let Dan make his getaway. Life is a long sentence.

Dan hadn't held it against him though. That was what had hurt. Nevius was a friendless sort of man. He couldn't even think of those old days without conjuring up a picture of Adkins walled up and in prison gray. Three years he'd been carrying that thought around, trying to tell himself that he'd only done his duty. He'd wished—oh, well, what difference did it make what he'd wished. The question was, what was he going to do now?

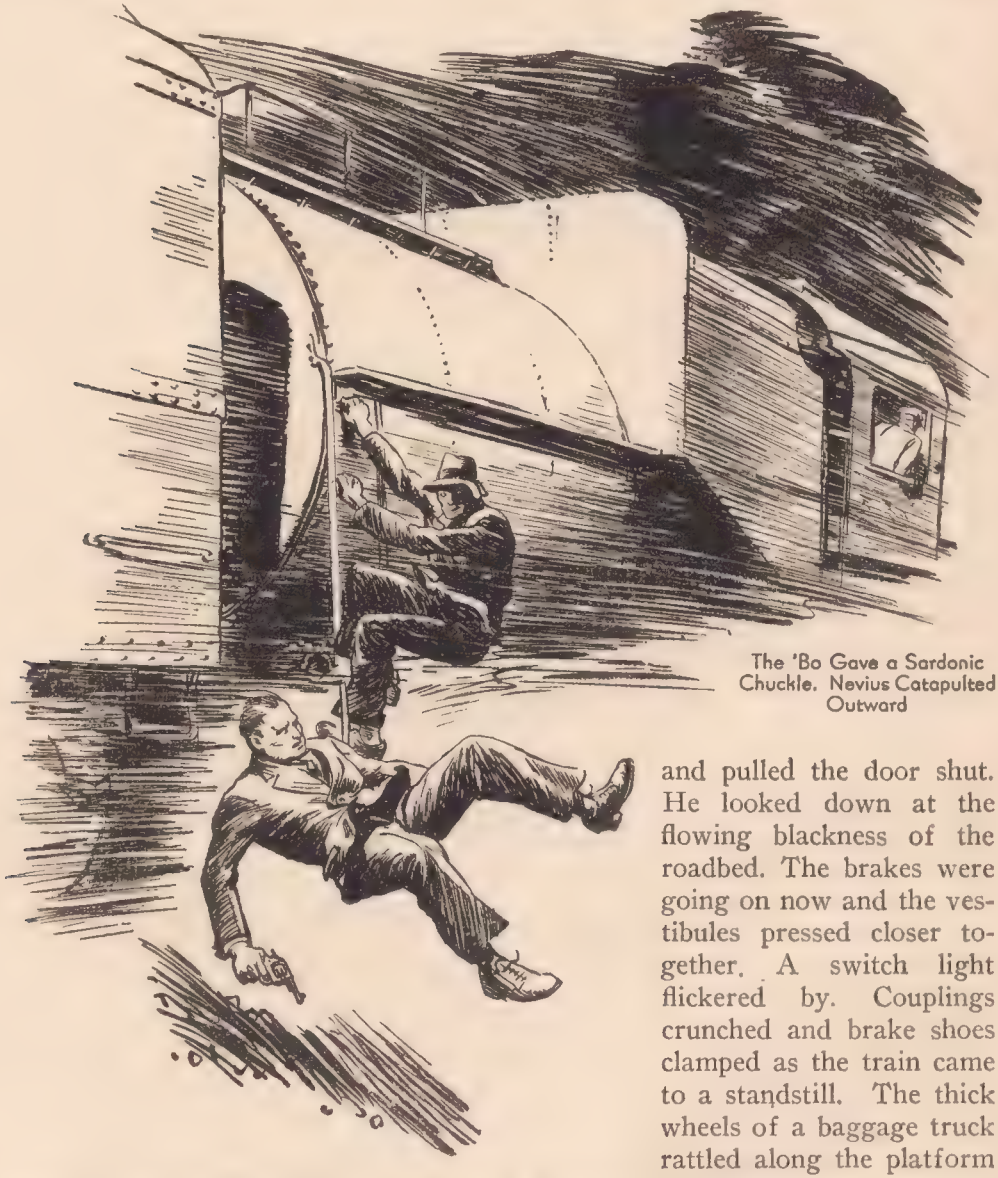
He had thought, these three long years, that there would be no doubt about it. Somehow, he had always imagined Dan would go straight if he ever got out. But now, remembering the man's bleak, hardened face as the latter had swung up into the blinds, Nevius was afraid. What if Adkins, embittered by that unjust sentence, was planning to square the deal by really turning bad?

"Ought to run him in, I reckon," the detective whispered to himself.

Reason told him this was the thing to do. He was sworn to uphold the law. His other nature revolted at the thought. Supposing Dan really wanted to go straight? Was worn and haggard and desperate from making his escape? Wasn't this the logical thing to believe? Reason and impulse struggled, and locked in a compromise.

He'd get off up at Multnomah and chase Dan out of the blinds, Nevius told himself. Dark as it was to-night, if he pulled his hat down Adkins wouldn't recognize him. There wasn't any use in Dan getting wise. Talking wouldn't get them anywhere. Just to make sure Dan didn't grab the train again, he'd ride the blinds on into Albany and wait there for the eleven o'clock manifest back to King City. There would be a fruit train stopping at Multnomah some time before morning. Dan could continue his getaway on it. Not so much chance of his getting pinched on the freight.

Nevius's big red face was almost sullen as he sat humped in his seat for the next quarter of an hour. Compromises were something that didn't set very well with him. The brakeman came to the rear door of the smoker. "M-u-l-t-n-o-m-a-h, Multnomah!" he called.



The 'Bo Gave a Sardonic Chuckle. Nevius Catapulted Outward

Nevius came out of his reverie to go hurrying to the front of the car. He pushed on through the door to the vestibule, opened the right hand vestibule door, the one that would be farthest from the Multnomah depot. He twisted around to stand on the lower step and pulled the door shut. He looked down at the flowing blackness of the roadbed. The brakes were going on now and the vestibules pressed closer together. A switch light flickered by. Couplings crunched and brake shoes clamped as the train came to a standstill. The thick wheels of a baggage truck rattled along the platform in front of the depot.

Nevius had dropped down out of his perch to the gravel surface of the roadbed before the train came to a complete halt. Bent low, he went

scurrying over to the cloaking shadows of a warehouse. Stealing along the side of the building, he continued up the track some little distance beyond the panting locomotive. No one had seen him, he felt certain. He wondered if Adkins still was riding the blinds.

The latter might have left the train if he thought Pop Woodward or the brakeman would take advantage of the stop to look them over. Adkins might be laying low until the train pulled out again. Nevius peered about trying to pick up some stealthy movement among the obscure outlines of the night. He thought, but couldn't be sure, he saw something raise up from behind a pile of ties. He stared hard at it.

"Some dude parked there, all right," he mumbled.

He glanced toward the engine. The hoghead leaned forward, released his air. Nevius imagined he could hear the brakeman call out, "All aboard!" Then the train was creeping forward, eager to be on its way. A dark figure left the inky square of the ties, raced over to the moving wall of the tender, leaped at it, disappeared.

"Well, Daniel—here's far as your ticket reads," said Nevius. He pulled his hat down well over his eyes, pulled up his coat collar. Then he also went hurrying over to the tender. Grabbing the bar, he pulled himself up to the rear of the car. As he squinted across the flat top of the tank, he fancied that he saw a head pull suddenly down out of sight beyond the oil manhole. There was a good place for a bo to ride up there on these new D. & E. tenders. Fortunately for Nevius's business, few of them knew about it. Dark as it was, the detective couldn't be certain he'd really seen any one. He decided he'd look in the blinds first.

He worked his way over to the open vestibule of the mail car coupled to the tender. A man was pressed tightly in one corner of it, a tall, thin man.

"All right, you—come on—unload!" snarled Nevius out of the corner of his mouth, slurring his words in a throaty growl pitched several notes lower than his natural voice.

For a second the bo looked at him uncertainly.

"Hurry up—get movin'!" Nevius prodded the man with the muzzle of his revolver.

The other muttered some blasphemy under his breath, then sidled over to the tender and felt his way along it. Nevius followed him closely, endeavoring to make certain it was Adkins. It looked like Dan, but he wanted to be sure. They came to the steps. The bo climbed down to the bottom one.

"She's goin' pretty fast," he protested, seeming to gaze down at the ditch at the edge of the right of way.

"Cut the stallin'," growled Nevius. He bent down to nudge the man on the shoulder, urge him a bit. "You know damn well—look out, you—damn you!"

The bo had grabbed his gun wrist, was jerking down on it, Nevius's frenzied fingers slipped from the grab iron, clawed across the smooth end of the car. The bo gave a shrill, sardonic chuckle. Nevius catapulted outward, head foremost, eyes wide to the onrushing blackness of the roadbed. His clawing left hand closed on the bo's skinny shoulder. Heels whipped over his head. His grip broke. He hurled downward. Feet plowed through the cinders of the roadbed. He stumbled forward. Sharp gravel scoured inches of hide off his fleshy left jowl. He rolled over into a mud puddle at the bottom of the grade.

"The dirty crook!" he gasped.

He staggered to his feet, dazed, shaking his head to clear it. He saw he was still clutching his gun. He looked up and saw the lighted panes of the baggage car doors gliding swiftly past him. His lynx eyes glittered banefully as he stared up track toward the fleeing tender. "Of all the killer tricks," he breathed, grimacing painfully. "Wouldn'ta thought it of Dan."

He stood there a moment collecting his wits. He'd messed things up for sure now. Out here was no place for him to be stranded. He'd have to catch the train. He could put Adkins off at Albany. Nevius holstered his gun and scrambled up-bank of the right of way. The day coaches were already passing him. He'd have to make it snappy. The observation car was nearly past the upper end of the brick platform of the Multnomah depot, was gaining momentum with each flashing second.

Nevius ran stiffly alongside the lighted wall of the first Pullman. He goaded his stunned body into a sprint. It seemed a snail's pace, his feet seemed leaden. The windows of the Pullman flickered past him swiftly, more swiftly. Caution told him he was a fool to grab it. Too easy to slip and fall beneath those whispering wheels. He glanced back over his shoulder, spotted the handhold beside the car's closed door. It swept toward him. He nailed it. Felt his arms jerk in their sockets. His big body banged back against the Pullman's steel door. His foot found the step. He climbed around between the vestibules, standing on the ledge. He clung there breathing shakily.

"Hell of a place to be ridin'," he growled.

The thought of sticking there during the thirty-mile run to Albany didn't appeal to him. A pretty mess he was, though, to be going into the train. Pop Woodward would be asking all sorts of fool questions. Nevius scowled worriedly. Just what had he better do? It came to him suddenly that if Adkins had a pass key to the mail car, or was planning somehow to break into it, there would be no better place on the road than this lonely stretch between Multnomah and Albany.

Dan's unloading him that way didn't help his case any. Made it look bad, damn bad! What he ought to do, Nevius told himself, was to go down the top of the train and grab Adkins now. Knowing what he did, he shouldn't be taking any chances. Still, he didn't have to pinch Dan necessarily. He could watch him from the top of the mail car.

"Oughta do it," he muttered.

III

He looked over at the tightly fitting mouths of the vestibules. Dangerous business climbing up them, dangerous and dirty. Nevius didn't relish the idea. If a man got shaken loose they'd have to pick him up in a bucket. He wet his dry lips and felt of his bleeding jaw. Well, he couldn't get much dirtier, that was some consolation.

He stepped closer to the diaphragms of the vestibules. He grabbed hold of their steel rims, drew a deep breath, placed the edge of his foot against a protruding corner and cautiously trusted his weight to it. Slowly, carefully, he pulled himself up the steel niche. From the top of it he crawled gingerly on up to the gently rounded roof of the Pullman. Far ahead a ruddy smudge of smoke belched from

the engine's white-hot innards. An oily blast swept back the tops. Tiny pellets of sand dust bit at Nevius's raw jaw. The moving night flattened the brim of his hat down against his damp forehead. He buttoned his coat more tightly about his neck. The road along here for several miles ran straight as a die, he remembered. Not much chance of a man being knocked off.

Nevius got to his feet, bent at the hips against the clutching fingers of the wind. He took a hesitant step forward. Habit reasserted itself. What was the use taking chances? He wasn't as nimble-footed as he once had been. He got down and crawled on his hands and knees, picking a course midway between the light shining up through the ventilators. Coming to the end of the Pullman, he climbed warily across the vestibules to the rear day coach.

A wind from the west was blowing the smoke of the engine away from the tops, a billowing streamer against the faintly starlit sky. Nevius peered ahead through slitted eyes. Four cars in front of him there was a sudden, spitting point of flame. The detective paused, watching the spot and waiting for it to happen again. A minute or more he stared into the night.

"Must be seein' things," he growled, unable to account for it.

He crawled on again. A cinder got in his eye as he was halfway down the top of the rear baggage car. He lay on his stomach working it out. When he looked up finally his vision was still blurred. Not so much, however, that he couldn't see a thin, angular figure outlined above the mail car by the orange-red smudge from the stack of the engine.

"Damn 'im, he's there—an' what's he up to?" whispered Nevius, forehead wrinkling in a troubled frown.

He twisted his head from side to side endeavoring to learn more of the ill-defined silhouette. There was something uncanny about the figure! Nevius had never seen anything quite like it. He wondered if his eyes could be on the bum. He swore under his breath. Not because of the figure's being up there. But because it was standing upright, clear over on the steeply sloping left edge of the top!

Such a thing, to Nevius's mind, defied the laws of nature. For a man to stand in such a position on top of a stationary car was next to impossible. Why the fellow even leaned outward! While in a wind, strong as it was, he should have been carried away like a floating log that comes to the brink of a waterfall. Nevius rubbed his eye with the gloved knuckle of his forefinger.

"Must be somethin' rotten. A man wouldn't be out there for his health. Maybe takin' a pot shot at the clerk?" he said in a hoarse undertone.

He shook his head stubbornly. He hated to believe such a thing, hated to admit it could be Adkins. Taking the ex-brakeman in again was going to be a bitter draught. Why couldn't Dan have left bad enough alone? The crazy fool! Nevius cursed him in a babbling whisper, cursed himself. He quit rubbing his eye and stared savagely at the mail car.

The figure had disappeared.

The detective crawled on again. He bridged a vestibule. Two more of them and he came to the mail car. The wind howled back across its smoke-grimed top. Of the phantom figure that had perched on its edge there was no sign. Where it had stood, however, Nevius saw that the light shone out much more brightly from the ventilator window. Coming closer, he realized that the screen and pane had been torn out

of the latter. A heavy line ran from the window and out of sight over the edge of the car. Nevius felt of it, found it to be a stout rope.

"So that's how he did that standin' stunt!" he grunted. "Was hangin' out lookin' down. In that case he must—"

Nevius could see how it could be done. The man had gone down the rope to the mail car door. Here he had probably broken out a pane in the window and reached through the bars to unlatch the door.

"I guess, Dan, you'll have to go back to the pen for this little job," Nevius muttered grimly. There was no question in his mind any longer about what he should do. Adkins would be better off locked up. It hurt, that thought. Nothing he could do about it though. Not now.

He twisted around so he could sight down through the broken ventilator into the mail car. Where the devil was the mail clerk, anyhow? The car looked peaceful enough. Bright lights shone down on the long, narrow floor, on the mail racks built in the walls. A bench was covered with letters as though they had been dropped hurriedly. Bits of broken glass sparkled in the light. Nevius's gray eyes narrowed in a malignant squint as he caught a glimpse of a man's skinny body bent over a pile of mail sacks. Then the fellow moved out of his range of vision. But not before Nevius had known it couldn't be the mail clerk. A coat as smudged and greasy as this man's could only have been worn by some one riding the blinds.

"Pickin' out the registered stuff, eh, Dan?" mumbled Nevius dully. "Can't stand for that. You'd ought to had more sense. Looks like you'da learned better."

He grasped the rope firmly, looked to see that it was still solidly hooked inside the ventilator, then went wriggling toward the edge of the car, feet first, flat on his stomach. There were other ways he might have gone about the capture, he reflected. He might have gone up front and wised up the engine crew. Or crawled to the rear end again and got Pop Woodward and the brakeman to help him. The only trouble was, the yegg might, in the meantime make a getaway.

With the doors of the mail car bolted from the inside, routing the fellow out would still be a problem. To follow down the rope was the surest, quickest way. Besides, Nevius felt that it was his job. His fault for letting Adkins catch the train in the first place. Fear never entered into his calculations. Not that he wasn't afraid. The wind seemed to tear at his legs as they pushed out into the empty void beyond the edge of the car. Nevius's fingers gripped more tightly on the rope. His jaw was set so that it seemed buried in the fleshy folds of his neck.

"Not such a hell of a nice business," he growled as he dropped over the side. He swung like a pendulum in the rushing night, thankful for the knots his hand had found in the smoothness of the rope. He dropped swiftly down it. The train was rounding a gentle left-hand curve, enough to swing him in against the car. Nevius could almost look into the engine cab. Could see the long, lighted rows of windows in the coaches behind him. Wondered if any of the passengers might be seeing him.

His feet found the door sill. The window had been broken all right. Still clutching the rope in one hand, Nevius peered through it. The bandit was too far away to be seen. The detective reached through the window and unfastened the lock of the door. He

pulled it gently open. For a breath, he was outlined in a square of light, plainly discernible to any one who might bother to look back from the engine cab. Then he had stepped into the car. Had whipped out his revolver.

Nevius Paled as He Saw the Killer's Arm Swing Upward

At first he couldn't see very clearly. The lights hurt his eyes. The bandit hadn't looked back yet. Nevius was glad of that. He wondered again where the mail clerk could be. Gray eyes searched around for him, then widened in startled horror as he saw the body of a man beneath one of the sorting tables. Pink froth was on the clerk's lips. A crimson stream crept away from his torn chest. The clerk was dead.

"Murdered—from on top!" whispered Nevius. A terrible look came in his face. It hardened, grew bleak as though carved of granite. Gray

eyes glinted metallically through slitted lids.

Nevius's hand gripped the handle of his revolver fiercely. If this were the sort of man Dan Adkins were now, a curse on him and all his kind! Nevius trained his gun on the stooping back, went darting toward it.

"You devil, you—put 'em up!" he yelled above the roar of the rushing train.

The man bent over the sacks stiffened, dropped a leather-cornered mail sack he had been lifting. His thin fingers spread like talons. Nevius's gun covered his heart. If those claw-like hands flashed back, Nevius would pull the trigger. Days of old be damned! Something of his frenzy tempered his hoarse, rasping bellow.

The bandit straightened, bony hands raising above his head. Slowly he turned. He stared at the detective from wolfish yellow eyes set in a hollowed death's head of a face, uneven teeth bared between purplish lips. Nevius gave a sudden inarticulate cry. Nostrils spread, lips parted. It was as though a ray of light had broken the immobile cast of his features.

"Why, you ain't Dan—ain't Dan at all!" he croaked.

A strangely twisted smile pulled at the corner of his grim mouth. The killer thought him a crazy man. A crafty glow came to his yellowish eyes.

"Of course not, I ain't Dan," he said in a wheedling, whining voice. "Whatever made yuh think that?"

Nevius's smile vanished. His lips pressed tightly. The pupils of his gray eyes contracted to pinpoints. "No, you ain't Dan," he gritted. "You murderer! Keep them mitts up!"

He moved, catfooted, up to the killer. Jerked a gun out of a shoulder holster beneath the man's grimed coat. He stepped behind him then and ran a hand deftly over the lean, sinewy body. In a side pocket of the coat he found a stubby little automatic. "Got plenty of these things, ain't you?" he grunted, slipping it in his own pocket. "All right, step away from them sacks. I want to look you over."

The fellow regarded him malevolently, watched the detective's every move as the latter unloaded the captured gun and cached it back of the safe. Nevius was taking no chances. The extra gun was in his way. The killer's gaze rested puzzledly on his peeled jaw and mussed clothes. "Say, buddy, who the hell yuh think yuh are?" he demanded. "Needn't get so high-toned. They's plenty here for both us."

"Yeah? Never seen me before, have you?"

The killer considered. "Yuh, the bird 'at tried to rush me outta the blinds?" he asked finally, doubtfully.

"Don't I look like it?" snarled

Nevius. "Seems to me I've seen a picture of that mug of yours somewhere." He was wishing he had a pair of handcuffs. This fellow was desperate. Nevius could read that in the glistening, soulless eyes. Given half a chance—well, he wasn't going to get any half a chance. Nevius circled around in front of the man. "You'll hang for this job."

The bandit's gaunt body tensed at the words. Wolf eyes clashed with the detective's metallic gray ones. Shifted down across Nevius's broad front. Stared fascinated at the long muzzle of the latter's revolver. The killer's thin lips curled suddenly in a derisive smile. Nevius scowled. Suspecting treachery, he clutched his gun more tightly as he backed away a step. Surely, the yegg wouldn't try jumping him. The fellow wouldn't have a chance. Still, Nevius was worried. He couldn't understand that smile. The bandit had glanced away from the gun, was edging forward.

"Stay back there!" snapped Nevius.

The killer stopped. Unconsciously his eyes dropped again to the revolver as though to reassure himself. Nevius gnawed uncertainly on his lip. He was a little afraid. He glanced down at the gun. Thick brows knitted nervously as he saw that the blue-steel muzzle was streaked with mud. He hadn't noticed that before. Must have done it when he got thrown from the tender. Must have rammed the muzzle into the mud puddle at the bottom of the roadbed. In that case, could it be that the barrel was plugged with mud? What was the fellow smirking about, if that wasn't it?

Nevius tilted the gun. The bore, he saw, was packed hard with damp earth! He heard the killer give a demoniac chuckle. Nevius lost his head. He didn't even try to pull the trigger of the fouled gun. Instead, he reached into his coat pocket for the bandit's automatic. He had a blurred picture of the killer's cadaverous face. The latter leaped at him in a spasm of fury and desperation.

"Play with me, will yuh!" he rasped.

A bony fist slashed out at Nevius's jaw. Nevius had got hold of the automatic, was trying to pull it from his pocket. The killer had wrenched the useless revolver from his hand and was grappling for the automatic. Nevius got a finger through the trigger guard, endeavored to shoot. Discovered the safety was on. Fumbled for it. Couldn't find it. Swore luridly. He saw the killer's arm swing up, using the other gun as a club. The heavy butt swished down for his head. Nevius dodged sideways, took the blow on his right shoulder. It numbed his arm. He'd got the safety off the automatic at last. His fingers were paralyzed. He couldn't use his arm. He stumbled backward.

"Look out—stay away—I'll drill you!" he hissed futilely.

He slugged awkwardly at the bandit's head with his left. The other sneered as he shuttled under it. Nevius felt the little automatic torn from his numb fingers. The killer trained it on his chest, death's head of a face twisted in a sardonic smirk.

"Lay off—" he panted.

Nevius grabbed at the gun. The other leaped back, drove a fist with all his strength into the pit of the detective's stomach. Nevius doubled up with a tortured cry, collapsed to the floor.

"Got more'n yuh bargained for, didn't yuh?" spat out the killer.

Nevius glared up at him defiantly.

"You can't get away with it," he whispered shakily, feeling deathly sick. His ruddy face was pale, deathly pale. He set his jaw against the sickening pain in his stomach.

"Can't I? Better guess again. An' don't get the funny idea I'm goin' to leave yuh here to run spillin' any story. Nope! Not this baby!"

The killer raised the automatic, cocked it, and slowly pulled the stubby barrel of it down on the detective's wide, white forehead.

Nevius stared helplessly at him, stared squarely into the merciless yellow eyes. So this was going to be his finish, was it? He didn't want to die yet. He tried to marshal his strength in a final effort. Realized the hopelessness of it. Oh, well— He settled back, a look of stupidity masking his feeling of horror.

From the corner of his eye he caught a movement up in the top of the mail car and in line with the killer's head. He stared at it. It looked like the steel muzzle of a gun peeking through the shattered ventilator. Couldn't be. Must be his imagination. A sudden deafening roar filled the narrow confines of the car. A silly, dazed look flashed across the killer's gaunt face. He leaned back slightly. The automatic lined up on Nevius's forehead jerked upward, exploded by a spasmodic twitching of the bandit's finger. A small, blue rimmed hole had appeared in the middle of the killer's brow. He pitched forward on his face, outstretched claws clutching at Nevius's huddled knees.

"God, what a close call!" breathed the detective. He batted his eyes, looked about him. "I wonder—"

But he didn't really wonder. He knew. Dan, it must have been, who had fired that shot. Couldn't have been any one else! Adkins must have been hidden in the front of the tender. Recognizing the detective as he had hung outside the mail car door, the escaping convict must have climbed to the top to see what it was all about.

"Damn lucky for me," thought Nevius.

He gazed at the small puff of smoke being sucked up into the ventilator. He might—no, Dan wouldn't want to be seeing him. Nevius could feel the ex-brakeman's passionless eyes watching him from out of the rushing, wind-torn night. Perhaps it was just as well. He could understand. He raised his two hands toward the ventilator, clasped them firmly together in a silent handshake. Then staggering to his feet, he headed unsteadily toward the door to the following mail car to tell a story of a holdup, frustrated single-handed.

THEY'RE MAKING 'EM QUIETER

YOU'VE heard, perhaps, of this new locomotive wrinkle that the Timkens bearing organization has developed, but you've got something mighty interesting and instructive in store for you next month in a splendid article called

Roller Bearings for a Roaming Jack

By JOHN A. THOMPSON

The Jersey Central's De Luxe Day Coach Train, The Blue Comet, Between New York and Atlantic City

Selling Passenger Service

The Railroads Finally Turn to Something Gay and Colorful to Attract the Traveler

By Franklin Snow

IF you have anything to sell these days you have to make it good, doll it up, give an eye to merit, worth, decoration, and a hundred and one other little things that go into making the successful commodity which will attract and hold the public eye, and then you have to use good advertising copy and expert salesmanship. Then, if you have what the public wants, your success is assured.

It hasn't been so many years ago that the railroads, unfortunately, had an idea that they could get by with most anything in the name of transportation. The railroads figured the public would have to ride anyway, so they gave the public dirty, uncomfortable equipment—too hot in summer, too cold in winter, hard riding and full of squeaks at any time—and the public was expected to like it. A decade or two ago the railroads had the transportation field all to themselves. To-day the railroads are making a bitter fight not only to hold what passenger business they can, but to win back the business they have lost to other agencies of transportation which have developed in the past ten years.

There isn't any question but what a

lot of directorial gentlemen and traffic officials have set back in recent years and wished for some one to administer a sound kick in the pants for their failure to see the handwriting on the wall and the changing tastes of a more and more exacting patronage.

But we are never too old to learn, according to a popular proverb, and the railroads have taken hold with a will. The metamorphosis in passenger travel has come tardily, but it has commenced, and it shows every indication of a healthy growth and progress.

The day coach of to-day, where the vast herd of paying passengers ride, is much more comfortable, and has better appointments than the gaudy and creaky sleeping and parlor car of yesterday. The up-to-date Pullman provides conveniences and accessories which heretofore have been found only in the choicest hotels and the best of homes. Dining cars are attaining a degree of sumptuousness which makes even a hopeless dyspeptic sit up and eat with relish and gusto.

In short, the railroads have something to *sell* their passenger patrons to-day if they never had before. People who have not traveled by rail recently have a lot to learn about the attractions of rail travel. And because some astute traffic men recognized the subtle effect of gay colors, many trains and locomotives have been bedecked in a gay raiment.

Day coach de luxe trains, with diner, observation car, and other types of equipment hitherto regarded as only

The California Sea Coast as Seen from the Observation Platform of The Daylight Limited, which Runs Between San Francisco and Los Angeles

to be used in the best limited trains; special rates on the all-coach specials; new stations and other appurtenances are all a part in the campaign to bring the traveler back to the rails.

The Auto Cuts In

THE local, short-haul business undoubtedly is lost forever to the motor car. Whether you query a trainman in South Carolina, on the Coast Line; in Massachusetts, on the B. & M., or in North Dakota, on the Northern Pacific, you will get pretty much the same reply, indicating that national prosperity has brought an automobile to every home, and journeys of moderate length are invariably taken by motor unless roads are impassable. So the railroads are resigned to the inevitable, and what the private motor does not take, the motor bus accounts for, in the shorter journeys other than in commuting territory to the large cities. The conductor who picks up more than half a dozen tickets for short trips is inclined to think that business is picking up, if his run is in the wide open spaces where highways parallel the main line.

No, it is not the local passenger for whom the improved equipment is intended. The railroads were sorry to see him go, but they realize that tastes in travel cannot be changed, and if the public likes to ride on rubber tires for short distances, such a preference could not be corrected even if the railroad offered free rides. It is the long distance traveler at whom the new type of railway salesmanship is directing its shafts. Faster trains and better equipment can hold him on the rails. The railroad managers intend that this shall be the result.

The New Dining Car. Round Tables Help to Break the Monotony of Regularity of Line. Drapes Help, Too

It is a matter which affects every

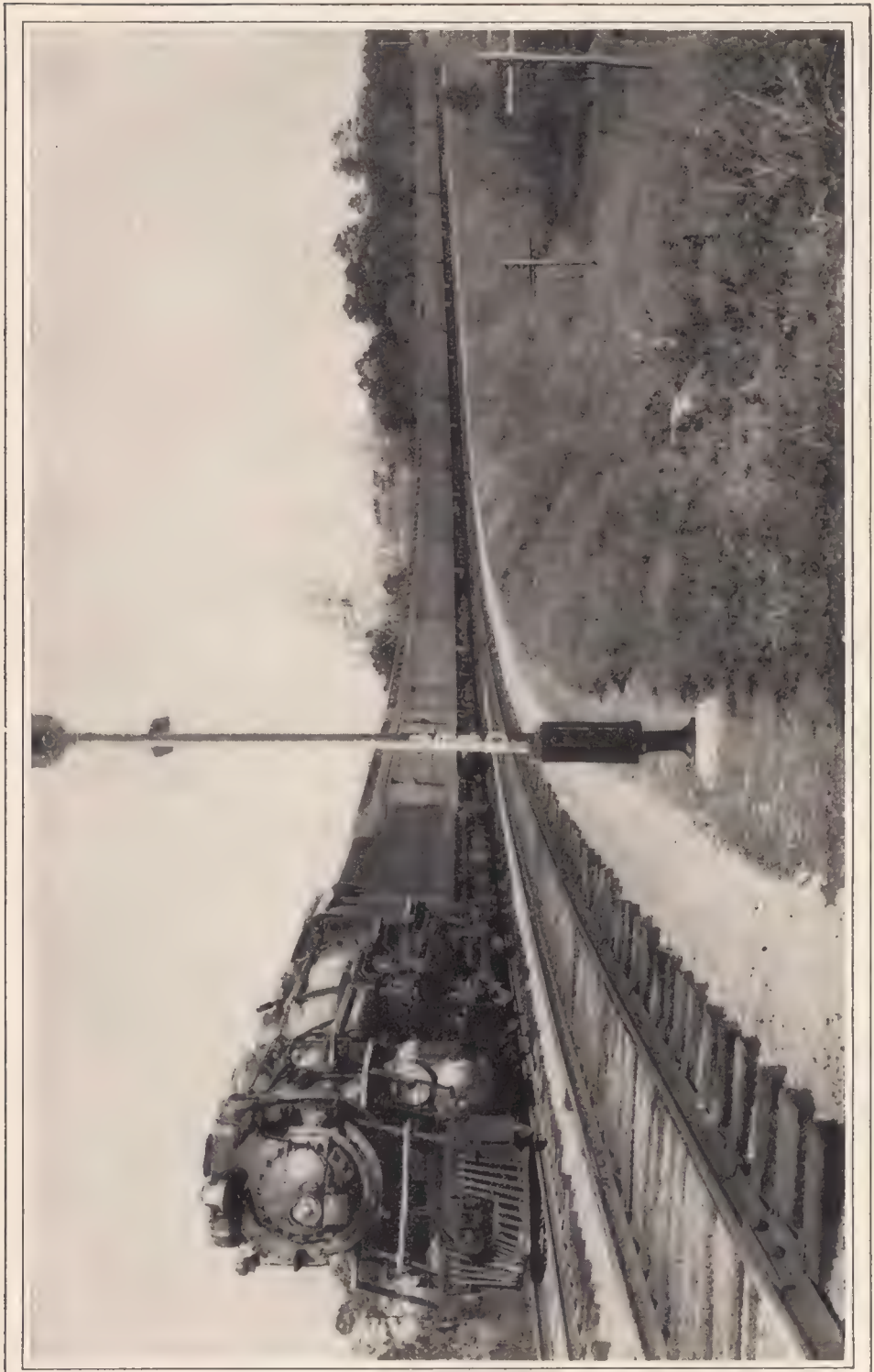
railroad man. There is no need for pleas for coöperation on the part of rail managements. Every engineer and conductor; every flagman and switchman; every ticket seller and gateman; every trackman and shopman; every employee of the Pullman Company, of the individual railroad dining car departments and other parts of the great rail organizations knows that a determined fight must be made to *hold* and to *create* passenger business.

It is of just as much importance to freight men, too, for should the long-distance passenger travel fall off, there would be many men released from passenger service who would, in turn, "bump" men holding down freight runs today. So rail managements and employees are standing shoulder to shoulder to make passenger service so good that people will travel by rail because they like to do so.

Sometimes one wonders if the railroad men and women, strung out along the ribbons of steel from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and particularly those out on the line—removed from the great cities — realize the vigorous efforts being made to take business away from the railroads; if they have grasped the entire significance of the situation; if they fully appreciate the efforts being made to take passengers from the rails.

Transatlantic steamship lines; winter and summer cruises; motor bus lines; aviation companies and others are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to take business away from the railroads. Every person they induce to travel by water, by air, by bus or motor, is one less rail passenger. Every railroad man or woman who can induce a person to travel by rail has contributed his bit toward making secure the jobs of thousands of rail-

The Individual Stateroom Aboard a Land Liner. A Pullman Innovation



The Crescent Limited, Crack Train of the Southern, Is a Good Example of Decorative Taste, Inside and Out

way employees whose future will be determined by the success of the railroads in making passenger travel so attractive and desirable that a rail journey will be something to look forward to in the prospective traveler's mind.

A few years ago day coach passengers took pot luck so far as getting their meals on a long trip went. At division points, where a ten minute stop was made, a grand rush ensued, with all coach passengers making an assault on the station restaurant to get outside of a doughnut, a piece of pie and something to drink before the bell rang to indicate that the few minutes of grace had expired. But now coach passengers who do not wish to visit the diner will have the diner brought to them, for waiters pass through the train at frequent intervals selling sandwiches, hot coffee, ice cream, and other edibles at nominal charges.

The Color Idea

But these are things which the passengers find *after* they have actually bought their tickets. When the railroads found passenger travel leaving them, the immediate necessity was to devise ways and means to hold the travel on the rails, and the first thought which occurred to them was bright colors. If kitchen sinks could be done in green; refrigerators in cerise; typewriters in yellow, and radios in blue, why could not trains be tinted in equally resplendent hues, the passenger managers reasoned?

There may be some doubt as to which railroad was the first actually to go in for the bright colors, for the Wabash had operated its Banner Blue Limited, and the Chicago & Alton its maroon Alton Limited for many years, so there was a precedent in the use of colors which got away from the standard blacks, reds and occasional yellows of passenger equipment.

So, without actually choosing the road which first employed color in the new era of attracting and holding passengers, it may be said that the Baltimore & Ohio, the Boston & Maine, the Southern Railway and the Milwaukee almost simultaneously went into the proposition. The B. & O. placed an order for 20 new locomotives of a dark green hue, with yellow decorations, and named each of them for Presidents of the United States, which, incidentally, marked a return to the old use of names for engines, although the B. & O. Pacifics also are numbered.

The Boston & Maine created two buff and blue locomotives — the Paul Revere and the William Dawes, Jr.— to pull its fast Minute Man train over the Boston-Troy run of 190 miles. The Southern Railway decided that green was an effective color, and all its engines now are decorated in a vivid Robin Hood green with plenty of gold tinting and piping. And if you think they don't keep those engines clean down on the Southern, just take a look at the one on the head end the next time you ride that road and you will be disposed to believe that the engine is making its first run, so brightly does the paint glisten in the warm Southern sun.

A touch of color was injected in the decorations of the locomotives pulling the Milwaukee's Pioneer Limited, and the American eagle was added as an evidence of speed, the bird with outstretched wings being placed above the boiler.

But it remained for the Jersey Central to show what color really meant in painting a train. Of course, bright colors had been used abroad for sev-

Pullman Equipment for the Rock Island Golden State Limited.
This Is One of the Fine Trains of the West

eral years—the Golden Arrow between Paris and Calais and, later, the Rheingold Express between Amsterdam and Lucerne being decorated in colors which would put Joseph's coat to shame—but the Jersey Central was the first American railroad to create a train in blue, with a wide sash of cream amidships.

The Blue Comet, as it is named, is something unique in American railroading. Its vivid colors are but an indication of what one finds upon inspection of the interior of the cars. From its coach smoker forward, through the modern new coaches with their bucket type individual seats, with wash rooms in porcelain, and with bright blue carpets the length of each car; through the dining car which, with its delicately blue shaded linens and chinaware, carries out the blue motif of the train, into the observation car, one finds an attention to the desires of passengers which indicates that travelers between New York and Atlantic City will find this all-coach de luxe train possessing conveniences unknown in the Pullman car a score of years ago.

There are other day coach de luxes, notably the "Daylight," of the Southern Pacific, between San Francisco and Los Angeles. This train is equipped with both a diner and a lunch car in the nature of counter service. It has an observation *platform* which seats 32 passengers, and the seats are in such constant use as to refute the views of those who aver that the inclosed end "bird cage" type of observation car is preferred by travelers. The Daylight has other appointments which have successfully brought business back to the railroad, despite active competition with bus lines, air lines, private motors and steamship lines.

It can be done. Passengers *can* be held on the rails if the railroads earnestly endeavor to cater to their comfort and convenience.

But that "if" is a big one. As I write I have before me a note from an individual whose comment on railroad trains is based upon wide observations of equipment and service. Excerpts from his letter read:

"Came up from Indianapolis to Chicago on the Monon. Rather a rough ride with an old parlor car, somewhat shaky. Trains to Milwaukee from Chicago on both the C. & N. W. and the Milwaukee have only their own equipment (old), with the most uncomfortable parlor car seats I ever sat in. The racks are too small for winter overcoats, and it is necessary to hang coats up on wire hangers; consequently, the cars look like clothing stores. The same was true from Cincinnati to Indianapolis on the Big Four, and the Monon to Chicago."

Now there is no great harm in calling specific attention to the reactions of a traveler to service on the railroads mentioned. It is to be hoped that officials or employees on these roads—all of which are faced by intensive competition by other agencies of transport—will read these lines and take the necessary steps to provide that character of service and equipment which will make their patrons want to travel with them again. The runs mentioned are important ones. They are not jerk-line trips. They are routes frequented by business travelers.

A Good Example of Progress in Observation Cars. This Is the Closed-in Type, Built as a Colorful Lounge, in Service on the Canadian Pacific

If service is below par, the patronage will leave these lines en bloc as soon as air lines are able to provide a safe and dependable service. It is the old problem which the railroads should have learned about in the loss of their short-haul business—to provide such excellent equipment before the business leaves them that their customers would not want to seek other means of transportation.

But elsewhere, more intensive thought is being given to the problem of holding the passenger on the rails. Improvements as spectacular as they are desirable have been effected.

Over on the Erie

Look first at the coach travel. On the Erie Railroad a coach smoker with seats after the type of club car chairs has been provided. Music issues from an undetected source as one stands beside the car and, deciding upon further inspection, one mounts the steps and enters the car to find a radio playing softly in the forward end.

Shades of Fred Underwood, whose ambition was to make the Erie almost solely a freight railroad! Walk back through the day coaches, equipped with the new bucket type seats, pass through the attractive diner and the sleepers and there, in the observation car, is another radio, for Pullman passengers.

Over on the New Haven ninety new coaches of this same type of seat, which fits a person's back, and which has a raised portion between the parts designed for the two persons to occupy, have been ordered and are now going into service. They seat only eighty passengers, against eighty-eight in the former cars, because they provide more space between seats. The cars are equipped with roller bearings.

Similar coaches are used on the Baltimore & Ohio, and, indeed, they are coming into general use on many roads, including the companion train of the Jersey Central's Blue Comet, known as the Bullet, which operates between New York and Wilkes-Barre.

All of these improvements are aiding the railroads and their employees, by providing talking points in the campaign to " sell the roads to the public " ; to bring more business to the rails and to hold that which still moves by rail.

Out West they do things of an even more revolutionary nature to create passenger travel. The Southern Pacific found that its Daylight all-coach de luxe between San Francisco and Los Angeles was a big money maker, so it established one from San Francisco to Portland, over the Shasta Route, on a schedule of approximately twenty-four hours, comparing favorably with the times of the best Pullman trains between these points.

The Klamath, as it is called, became an immediate success. Because of motor coach competition, the S. P. decided to offer a bargain rate of $15, against the regular fare of approximately $25. Travelers preferred the quicker rail journey to the long motor coach trip, and, with competing rates, the railroad filled its train daily. Then it decided to offer both dining and standard and tourist sleeping car accommodations on the train, at the same rail fare, plus, of course, Pullman charges for those using sleepers. The idea worked out in a manner exceeding the most sanguine expectations of its originators.

Of course, lower rates *create* travel, and it is no more expensive to haul ten coaches well-filled than to haul ten half empty Pullmans. So, if a rate of $10 is offered for the coach travel, and per-

haps 200 passengers are carried for a through journey at this rate, the train earns more money for the railroad than the Pullman train with only 100 passengers, each of whom paid $15 for the same trip.

The average passenger official would fall off his chair if reduced rates were proposed to him as a means of creating new business on routes for which travelers now pay the regular rates. He would aver that it would break down the regular rate with not enough increased business to offset this loss.

Yet, the idea *works* wherever it is tried. The New Haven is giving thought to it on its Boston-New York night trains for coach travel.

And if reduced rates stimulate the thought of rail travel and cause erstwhile rail travelers to return to the railroads and note the splendid new equipment now available to them, there is every reason to believe that the publicity would create future business.

The Progressive Roads Win

In short, precedent is being cast to the winds, as indeed it must be, in promoting the thought of " travel by rail." New conditions are met, so new ideas must be evolved to cope with them. Conservatism in fighting for passenger traffic is no longer a virtue. It is the progressive roads which are winning out.

It is not only the day coach travel, however, which the railroads are catering to. Pullman business is receiving similar attention, although, of course, Pullman travel has not been subject to the losses which have occurred in coach travel. When the airplane gets actively into the picture, however, the Pullman business will then be subject to the same keen competition that has affected coach business. The roads are building then, for the future, in providing betters cars and facilities.

Take the Rock Island Lines. When the Golden State, the Rocky Mountain and the Nebraska Limiteds were fitted out with new cars from engine to observation, some one conceived the brilliant thought of placing windows in upper berths. Revolutionary? Certainly. But that was no reason for re-

The Minute Man, Fast Pride of the Boston and Maine Railroad

jecting the idea. It was introduced, and now passengers in uppers may regulate their volume of ventilation and also determine their location.

at the back of the car. But because these cars are not liked by travelers in summer — their heavy-meshed screens serve effectively to conceal the scen-

The Pullman with Windows in the Upper Berth, Built for Rock Island

Lounge cars in the center of trains have acquired new heights of luxury. With their gayly striped decorative effects in chair coverings and window hangings, with little booths for cards or work, with retiring rooms of greater size and convenience, they remind one of the well-appointed hotel.

Observation cars, too, have developed a new technique. No longer is there a row of straight leather or green plush chairs on either side. The monotony is broken by the introduction of attractive colors; by different types of furniture, with here a straight chair, there a comfy one, next to it a lounge for three; with soft colored lamps on tables or parchment shaded brackets casting a mellifluous glow of enchantment over the scene when evening comes.

On a few railroads the rear ends of trains now are being inclosed, the open end observation having been superseded by the " bird cage " type, which provides an inclosed section for smokers

ery—only a relatively few roads, and those largely of lighter traffic, have adopted them. The fine open end observation, with its shining brass railing, not only appeals to all travelers, but has a definite advertising value as well.

The Great Crescent Limited

PERHAPS the pinnacle in achievement was reached when the new Crescent Limited, fast Southern Railway New York-New Orleans flyer, entered the picture last fall. Resplendent in light green Pullmans bearing the name of the train on the name board of each car with " Pullman " in small letters at either end, the exterior was of a type calculated to intrigue the traveler's interest in what he would find within.

Permanent headboards in sleepers; soft mauve or gray upholstery; parchment shaded wall lamps in every section; compartments and drawing-rooms embracing innumerable refinements in detail.

But it was scarcely placed in service when the Burlington introduced three new trains of a similarly modernistic trend, although not all Pullman. These are the Ak-Sar-Ben (which is Nebraska spelled backward and hyphenated), between Chicago, Omaha and Lincoln; the Black Hawk, Chicago-Twin Cities, and the Aristocrat, Chicago-Denver. Only a year ago the Great Northern's Empire Builder, from Chicago to the North Pacific Coast, was regarded as the last word in appointments.

And so it goes. Down on the Coast Line they decided that dining cars need no longer look like schoolrooms, so they turned an interior decorator loose on the cars with the result that the end tables are for four passengers on each side; then come smaller tables, with bevelled edges, for two, and then smaller round tables for two.

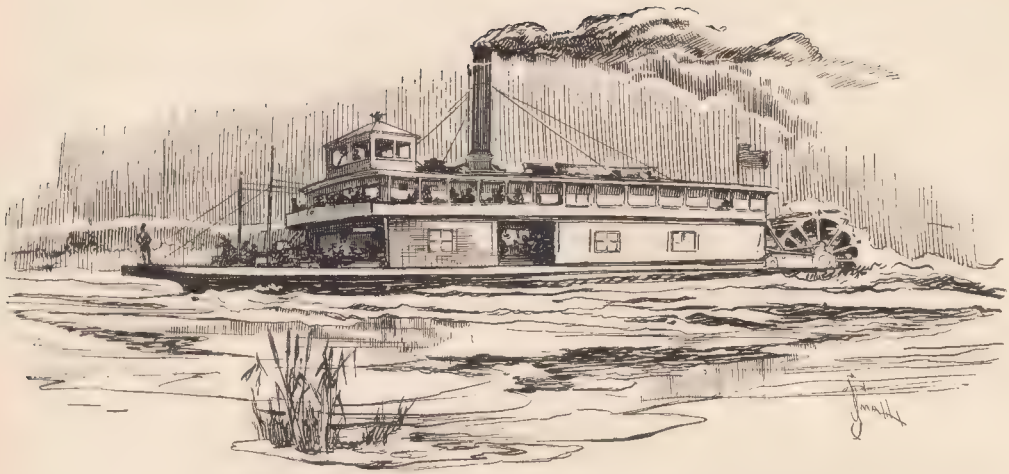
Speaking of diners, you have the observation dining cars used on the Boston & Maine's Minute Man train from Boston to the west; there is radio in the Canadian National, the Milwaukee Road, the Erie and the Louisville & Nashville Limiteds; there are "mountain" observation cars—flat cars with rows of seats, each with individual wind shield—on practically all the American and Canadian roads which cross the Rockies; altogether, the rail traveler has conveniences and comforts thrust upon him which simply cannot be offered by any other agency of transport—highway, airway or waterway.

Step on the Cascade, crack train of the S. P. from San Francisco to Portland, and you will find a telephone in every car. Of course, telephones in observation cars, which are hooked up with station switchboards prior to train departure time, are "old stuff" in limited trains, but the Cascade goes the others one better. For *this* telephone system remains in service during the entire run of the train. Do you want tea or ginger ale? Have you clothes to be pressed? Do you want a sandwich between meals? Just pick up the phone in the corridor and telephone up to the club car, the diner or elsewhere and place your order.

Do you know that one may cross the continent by rail in three and one-third days? Few people do. But it is true; and it is a soliciting point which the railroads have been all too reticent in exploiting. Hop on one of the twenty-hour New York-Chicago flyers at 2.45 or 3 P.M., and change at Chicago in the morning to the Overland Limited of the Northwestern-Union Pacific-Southern Pacific or the Chief, of the Santa Fe and you will be in San Francisco or Los Angeles only a few hours more than three days out of New York. Think of it! From New York on Sunday afternoon to the California cities at about 7.45 P.M. Wednesday evening.

No need to fly, despite the strenuous efforts of some railroads to divest themselves of passenger traffic by urging people to fly, a graceful act on the part of the railroads and one for which their competitors, the air lines, should be duly grateful, but probably *won't* be, if they can capture part of the railroads' long-distance traffic.

Yes, sir, the railroads have a lot to sell. But it will require the combined efforts of the 1,800,000 men and women in railroad service, and the members of their families, to tell the remainder of the populace what it's all about. There's lots to sell, and there are plenty of people waiting to be sold, but precedent has to be cast to the winds and a new deal made in going out after the potential traffic awaiting the railroads.



The Prairie Belle Was Swinging Around a Wide, Easy Corner

The Mask of Ching Wo

Even the Cagy Sheriff Didn't Know When the Man With a Price on His Head Stood Before Him

By Max Brand

Illustrated by Fred Small

CHAPTER I

IN the days before the Union Pacific cut its iron way across the continent the sole means of communication with undeveloped sections of the West consisted of horseback riders, covered wagons, stage coaches and river boats.

One of the most famous of those boats, the Prairie Belle, was swinging around a wide, easy corner of the Sacramento and coming into a great shallows, where the water was so still that all of a sunset cloud lay upon its face. Beside this reflected glory the central current of the river ran with only a dim ripple.

Entering the easy going, the steam engine instantly gathered speed, the old river boat trembled with the throb of power, and the paddle-wheel under the stern dashed on with renewed energy.

In spite of the increased noise of the engine and the wheel, however, the Prairie Belle was fairly quiet. For the whole of the noise-making elements of the passenger list were gathered into the smoking room, where they had been playing poker since they left San Francisco, and where a crooked gambler's more crooked faro box was also heavily patronized.

They had been drinking, too, filling themselves with whisky and wines which had been carted in swift clipper ships from Boston, New York and New Orleans, all the dreary, wild journey around the Horn.

Some of those champagnes which

were opened for the card players on the Prairie Belle were worth almost their weight in gold dust. But of dust there was plenty; and even though the money belts of some of the players were almost empty, they were going into the regions where gold was easily washed from the earth, or where the gullible gold diggers could easily be looted by cleverer minds.

All of the noise and merriment were confined to the cabin, however, and the voices which arose there after a big play came only dimly out onto the prow of the boat, where a great many of the poorer passengers were collected.

Here, too, there had been dice games on the deck. A mandolin had been trembling out its music in the hands of a Mexican seated on an apple barrel near the port rail. But the games had ceased, and the mandolin was still as the prow of the ship cut into the heart of the reflected cloud upon the water. For now the passengers had begun to look out over the marshes and plains bordering the Sacramento River.

On either side the tules stood tall and thick. And where the solid ground came down to the water's edge, some cattle lifted their dripping muzzles and watched the ship go by. Not long before, such a sight would have sent the half-wild creatures frantic with fear—as locomotives were destined to do some years later—but now it was long since they had grown accustomed to the steady procession of "fire canoes" that worked up the river toward the gold fields.

Beyond tules and cattle extended the darkening flat of the plains, dimly streaked here and there with the oaks which grew along the sloughs and looked, in this half-light, like undulations of smoke.

Two Chinamen, standing together by the starboard rail of the Prairie Belle, imitated the silence of all the whites until, the sunset fading still more, dice games were resumed, the mandolin began its song again, and patches of conversation sprang up here and there. Then Fow Ming spoke.

For a Chinaman he was very big—nearly six feet, and with the shoulders and grim face of a warrior. A jagged scar on the right cheek made him appear yet more resolute and formidable.

Said Fow Ming: "We are riding on a dragon's back, my friend. There is fire in its belly, smoke in its nostrils, and its voice is a groan."

Li Wo made soft answer: "It is going, also, into what the white men consider heaven, but which you will find closer to their hell."

Their native tongue aroused the antagonism of a great sullen-faced boor, who gripped Li Wo by the shoulder and thrust him roughly away.

"You damn' Chinks, stop your yappin', if you can't talk a white man's lingo."

The teeth of Fow Ming set with a click, but Li Wo hastily caught his arm and drew him forward, nearer to the prow.

"He has lost at faro," Li Wo explained, "and he's only waiting for an excuse to cut our throats."

"I, also, carry a knife," said Fow Ming.

"Good," Li Wo responded, "but every man's hand is against us. If we strike back, we are dead."

"It is better to die than to be dishonored," Fow Ming growled savagely.

"What did the Great Teacher say?" quoted Li. "'In every man's country, follow his customs.'"

"What customs are they?" said

Fow Ming. "These men are barbarians. They are as low as coolies in our own country. They are lower still! They are neither well born nor well taught, nor do they have the manners of gentlemen!

"I know them—I know them," Fow Ming added after a pause. "I have lived in San Francisco long enough to understand them. We must go with our heads continually bowed. I have seen our brothers struck in the face because they dared to look up."

"It is not you and I who have taught them to hate us," said Li Wo. "But the honest, hard-working coolies have made them angry."

"That I understand. But how?"

"Because in the mines the white laborers eat meat three times a day, and drink a great deal of coffee. Once a week they must make themselves drunk with bad whisky. And men with such habits must have high wages. Against them, consider the coolies. Twice a day they sit down with a bowl of rice and a little fat in it for seasoning. When they have eaten that, they are contented. They can work for a quarter of what the white man must have. And the money they make, they save."

"They save," said Fow Ming, "until the white devils murder and rob them and take their money away!"

"True," said Li Wo. "They are murdered and robbed, at times. But still the number of Chinamen increases. More and more of the gold sticks to their hands. You will find our countrymen who have gained in one year enough to take them back to China and keep them wealthy the remainder of their lives."

Fow Ming sighed. "May the day soon come when I go over the ocean once more!"

The other, overcome with his anger, did not speak for a time, but regarded the darkening face of the water.

Meanwhile, from the smoke room a slender young man came sauntering forward with a fumbling step, as though more than two-thirds mastered by liquor. He sang in a faint, stumbling voice and laughed a little at his own errors.

"Look well, Li Wo," said Fow Ming. "There is a gambler or a gentleman. I can tell by his clothes."

A deck-lamp had gleamed upon the gaudy pattern of the fellow's waistcoat, upon his tall, white hat, upon the diamond in his neckcloth.

"Who would debase himself in the eye of the whole world?" inquired Li Wo. "Oh, my friend, that we should have to cringe before such creatures!"

The youth had gone straight to the tip of the prow, as though he were going to walk on into the river. No one attempted to stop him. No one gave him advice. He was allowed to stand there on the verge, teetering perilously back and forth.

The rest of the passengers of the deck began to laugh.

"I'll bet fifty dollars against a hundred that he falls in," volunteered one gambler.

The same ruffian who already had manhandled the Chinaman now strode out to have a better look. "I wouldn't take you for more'n even money."

"I'll give you three to five," persisted the first man. "That's odds enough for you, Charlie."

"Why," began Charlie, and then, as he turned to answer, his foot struck the baggage of Li Wo, a rounded bundle wrapped in stout cloth. Charlie, stumbling over this obstacle, no sooner saw what it was than he burst into a curse and snatched it up.

"They ain't room in the world for me an' two Chinks," said he. "Go after it, you rat, if you want it!"

He scooped up the bundle and was about to hurl it over the rail when Fow Ming checked his hand.

There was power in the oriental's arm, and Charlie's grip was broken. He staggered, the bundle coming out of his hand and remaining in that of the big Chinaman.

The Drunken Youngster Reeled in Charlie's Path

At this, Charlie became so furious that he could not speak; he uttered a sort of screeching cry. It caused all hands to turn toward him. Even the youthful drunkard at the prow began to ramble unevenly toward the scene.

"Look!" yelled Charlie. "I'm handled an' manhandled by a pair of lousy damn' Chinks! Why, I'm gonna cut the kidneys out of the pair of 'em. I'm gonna—"

His voice ended in another inarticulate shout of rage. Not a soul stirred to stop him in his rush, though the great, gleaming bowie knife in his hand showed that he meant business even as he had promised it. But the life of a Chinaman, as Fow Ming and Li Wo had already said, was worth no more than the life of a dog, in the California of the gold-rush days. They stood by, and on more than one brutal face appeared a gaping grin of expectation as the bully charged.

Chance, however, had brought the tipsy youngster back from the prow, and he reeled into Charlie's path. There, floundering to get away from the charge, his feet became entangled in the legs of Charlie, but it was the latter who fell heavily, the bowie knife spinning out of his hand.

CHAPTER II

Both Fow Ming and his slenderer companion had stood still in the pres-

ence of the charge, with faces like two yellow masks. When the knife rattled at his feet, Fow Ming's eye glinted like the eyes of a snake and a ghost of a smile tugged at the corners of his mouth.

But Charlie was down, not out. He came to his feet in a foaming frenzy.

First he looked wildly about him for the fallen knife; but one of the soft-soled shoes of Fow Ming now covered it. Then he stared at the Chinamen, lurched a little toward them, and finally decided that the white youth must come first.

"I'm gunna sober you!" he bellowed to the boy. "I'm gunna bust you in two an' drop the pieces into the river." Charlie's fists clenched.

The youngster, in the meantime, had not sought to flee, but remained near by, wavering a little from the perpendicular, from time to time, but apparently without fear. He showed a dark, finely cut face, and an olive skin, almost like that of a Mexican; a Mexican's black eyes, too, were fixed good-naturedly upon Charlie while he answered: "Frightfully sorry, old fellow. Wouldn't have tripped you up for the world."

"You lie, damn you!" yelled Charlie, and started forward.

The drunkard did not move. With hands dropped lightly into the pockets of his coat, he remained staggeringly in place, watching the charge of the big fellow.

Yet the first rush did not succeed. Perhaps it was the tremor which ran through the ship as it nosed again into the heart of the current at the next bend that threw the tipsy boy off balance. At any rate, he reeled suddenly to the side as Charlie, floundering past him, whirled again, redeyed as a bull, and bellowing as loudly. His face frightful to see, but a frightened voice yelled:

"Charlie! Hey, you fool! It's Delancey! It's Handsome Harry!"

The effect upon the ruffian was like that of a whip stroke fairly across the face. He checked his own rush, and with such suddenness that he almost fell.

"Handsome Harry!" he gasped. "Oh, my God!"

Shrinking inches from his former stature, he slunk off into the crowd and was gone.

Handsome Harry remained in the midst of the deck, surrounded by a respectful silence and many bright, curious eyes. For a moment he faltered there, then made his slow, uncertain way aft again, murmuring:

"Dreadfully sorry — wouldn't have dreamed—shocking affair—dear me, dear me!"

The passengers drew a little back to either side and gave him an easy way aft. After he had gone, it seemed that every one breathed more freely.

As for the Chinamen, Fow Ming rolled his eyes in a single expressive glance at Li Wo, who glanced back. That was all. It was not until long minutes afterward that Fow Ming, stooping, gathered the long, bright blade of the bowie knife up the sleeve of his silk coat and passed his sensitive fingers along the haft, rudely indented by three notches.

The interruption had stopped all talk except for a few murmurs that began to rise, here and there.

One strapping youth inquired softly of his companion: "Who's Handsome Harry?"

"Well, who you think, tenderfoot?" responded the other.

"Why, you'd think he was gunpowder, with a lighted fuse buried in it!"

"Well, he is, kid."

"One of those killers, eh?"

"Him? Handsome Harry?"

"Yes."

"Listen to me, son," explained the older man, "when it comes to a gent like Handsome Harry, the best thing in the world is for you to keep your face shut. Don't go askin' questions, even. Just pick up information here an' there. That's what I mean to say."

"Only," said the youngster, "I'd like to know why it is, if he's a murderer, that he ain't arrested right quick."

"Who'd arrest him?" said the other. "Is there men enough aboard? I dunno! *I* wouldn't make one of the crowd that tried it. Not unless they was ten ranks deep an' me in the last rank. Who would it *pay* to arrest him?"

"Well, but there's a sheriff aboard, ain't there?"

"Callin' a man a sheriff don't make him shoot no straighter. Besides, they ain't apt to be no warrant out for Handsome. A slick gent like him, he never shoots till the other sucker has filled his hand. An' after that, it's self-defense, ain't it?"

"You mean he's so fast he can wait?"

"That's what I don't mean nothin' else. Look at him, drunk like he was, an' still Charlie Jennings couldn't lay a hand on him! An' Charlie's a fightin' man, too. Don't make no mistake about that!"

"He was pretty quick scared."

"Naw, he just pretty quick got sense, that was all!"

They talked of other things, and Fow Ming said softly to his friend:

"Oh, Li Wo, no matter how drunk, that youth is a man, is he not?"

"He is," said Li Wo.

"And a warrior."

"Yes."

"Perhaps a gentleman, too, after the ways of this wild country?"

"Yes," said Li Wo.

"Do you know of him?"

"What is there to know?" responded Li Wo. "We hear of him now and then. Men love to talk of such a man as Handsome Harry Delancey, but no man sees him twice! No ear hears him twice! Look! One man on this boat knew him, and that one man is now hiding in a dark corner like a mouse, I am sure, and wishing he had let Charlie Jennings die!"

"To be so fatal," said Fow Ming, with great interest, "he is very young, is he not?"

"Into the brains of some men wisdom is put; into the hands of some men wisdom is put. The wits of Handsome Harry are not stupid. Neither are his hands!" Li Wo pointed before him. "There is the city in which my house stands, Fow Ming. There is Buffalo Flat!"

Beyond the bend, seen through the willows which here lined the high bank of the stream, appeared the lights of a town which grew brighter and thicker as they drew near, and at last they could see the whole place spread before them.

"Down from that river," continued Li Wo, "come the miners with their gold dust from the mines. More of them come, also, from higher up the Sacramento. Here they stop, usually. Here they enjoy their first taste of the gold they have dug, and here they leave a great share of it. A man with a filled purse does not stop eating until he has forgotten hunger!"

They laughed a little together, very softly, as the boat slipped into its mooring. A shouting crowd was on

the bank. Other voices yelled from the steamer, and soon the gangplank was run out and the people flooded down.

"We wait until the last," said Fow Ming bitterly. "Even the Negroes go down before us!"

So it was that they stood by and watched the others descend. And among the rest, Charlie Jennings, striding through the crowd, cast a black look upon them and went on.

"That man," Fow Ming remarked, "wishes his knife were in our hearts. And the edge of his knife is sharp—I am thumbing it now!"

He smiled at Li Wo, who answered rather carelessly: "I am not without a shelter in time of need, friend. Let us go on without fear."

They took their bundles down the gangplank when their turn at last came. Slipping out of the crowd, they circled the busy end of the Main Street and went down to the side of the town.

At last they came to a little hump-backed bridge across an insignificant slough which emptied into the Sacramento, and in the center of the bridge Li Wo paused.

"There is the American city behind us, my friend. On the farther side we come to our own country. There is only a little of it. But the color of heaven is still blue, even though it have fallen into a duck pond! In that town I hope to make you welcome. I hope to make you comfortable for a few days."

"And can you make me safe?" Fow Ming asked curiously. "Do the Americans stay from the place?"

"Who can keep them out?" responded Li Wo gloomily. "Sometimes the wild young men come on their horses and ride up and down the streets, shooting. It is not twenty days since a good man was murdered as he sat at the door of his house. He was shot by a wild young fool, who killed, not in malice, but for the sake of the noise his gun made."

Fow Ming drew in his breath through expanded nostrils, but at length he said grimly:

"We are being followed. Let us hurry on across the bridge. Let us get to safety among your own people. For the brute is at our heels once more!"

Li Wo looked back, and saw that burly Charlie Jennings was not far behind them at the beginning of the little bridge. He started on at once, murmuring:

"Quickly, but not too quickly, my friend! If we run, he will commence shooting, and if he were to kill us before the very door of my house, not one of my neighbors would dare to stop him, or to revenge us!"

CHAPTER III

THAT unpleasant suggestion did not make Fow Ming hasten or falter in his gait, but he went on with a regular step, though the shadow of the head and shoulders of Charlie Jennings now began to play about the feet of the fugitives, as he swept down from the crown of the bridge.

But the faces of the two Chinamen masked the utmost agony of spirit, for they knew what lay before them. To resist was probably to die. They would be lucky if they escaped with merely a beating and mockery and humiliation. Both of them could remember horrible sights of their countrymen with queues tied together being dragged at the heels of horses, or forced to drag carts like beasts of burden.

Such things might happen to them, now, at the fancy of Charlie Jennings;

and if they resisted, they were sure to bring down upon their own section of the town the wrath of the white city across the slough.

"He is on us!" said Li Wo, a spasm of horror convulsing his face.

Suddenly the long arm of Jennings reached out behind them and fastened on Li's shoulder, jerked him around, and then crashed him against the railing of the bridge.

With beastly joy Charlie Jennings studied the lithe Chinaman, the calm, undaunted face, the lowered eyes which still sought to turn away wrath by giving no offense, by indicating neither fear nor contempt.

"I'm gunna teach you somethin'," said Charlie Jennings. "I'm gunna teach you what a white man's fist tastes like, an' after that you can dive over the rail an' drink slough soup. Why, I'm gunna teach you manners, that's what I'm gunna do, you yaller pigs! I'm gunna teach the two of you!"

He ended with a burst of furious satisfaction, for he saw that Fow Ming was standing motionless by. He would not have been so delighted if he had known that one of Fow Ming's sleeve-hidden hands was now gripping hard the handle of Charlie's bowie knife.

As he turned upon Fow Ming, he saw another form come lightly up the arch of the bridge from the Chinese section of the town toward the white. But it was no oriental. There was something familiar about that figure, and about the light, fumbling step.

He hesitated one more instant, then the slender youth stopped, and he heard the genial voice of Handsome Harry Delancey crying: "Why, here you are again, Charlie Jennings! Here you are again! I'm glad to see you!"

The words were cheerful. There was nothing but friendliness in the voice, and yet Jennings was filled with doubt. He merely growled:

"Here's a pair of sneakin' Chinks that of stole my knife, between 'em, an' that are laughin' up their sleeves at all of the white gents in the world. I wanta ask you, are we gunna stand for that, old-timer? Are we gunna stand for that, Harry, or are we gunna teach 'em a lesson right here an' now?"

"Ah, but, Charlie," said Handsome Harry, "you're a little young to be a teacher, don't you think? Just a little young—and out late at night, too—terribly late at night. Don't you think I ought to take you home?"

There was no doubting the attitude that lay beneath his smiling exterior, and Charlie Jennings stared at the newcomer with the most earnest hatred. He wanted more than all things to go for his gun and blow this persecutor off the bridge.

He would have paid down ten years of life for such a delight, as a matter of fact, but now it seemed to Charlie that he was looking at the very face and form of a smiling death as he surveyed young Harry Delancey.

Charlie Jennings backed up. He forgot the two Chinamen altogether, and then, spinning about, he bolted at full speed over the arch of the bridge. He much preferred life to honor!

Handsome Harry did not run in pursuit, but laughed a little in wicked enjoyment. Then he sauntered forward without so much as a glance toward the two orientals.

"Let's go on," Li Wo suggested.

"And leave him without a word of thanks?" said Fow Ming. "By my honorable fathers, I am not a worthy man if I do not go to thank him for something that is worth more to me than life!"

"And have him spit in your face?"

asked Li Wo. "That is how he would answer. I know these people. To him, that brave young man, we are no more than a pair of dogs."

"Are you sure?"

"I am sure."

"There is a curse on these people, then," said Fow Ming sullenly. "Let us hurry on, now. I am a little sick at heart."

They went onward, therefore, through the entanglement of twisting streets which all were silent and empty, now, except for an occasional householder seated at the door of his shop or house, puffing at a long-stemmed pipe. The houses were of the flimsiest construction, huddled together in heaps and looking as though they needed their mutual support in order to keep from collapsing. Most of the windows were now shuttered so as to keep light in and the air out.

He Bolted at Full Speed Over the Arch of the Bridge

A solitary voice made the rest of the silence more unendurable; but neither Fow Ming nor Li Wo spoke of it as they journeyed on. It was too bitter to them. It was the shadow of the dominant race which silenced their people like the shadow of a sailing hawk.

They came, at last, to a street which ended against the river embankment, and at the end of the street there was a house with open street door, and a squatting figure smoking a pipe there.

"That is my house," said Li Wo.

As they came to it, the doorkeeper stood up and moved a little to the side, then bowed low to them. They passed up some creaking steps and through a number of little, wretched rooms, very dirty and in disorder so great that Fow Ming looked straight before him, and studied to keep the contempt from appearing in his face.

Li Wo had guided them by the light of a dim lantern taken from the first room, and now he raised the lantern above his head and scrutinized a strong

brick wall—such as might be built to retain the river embankment. In the center of this wall he tapped twice, paused, and tapped rapidly three times again.

At once a narrow section swung outward. The servant who had opened the hidden door backed away, bowing deeply.

Across this threshold, Fow Ming found himself in a different world. A faint and unearthly fragrance hung in the air, without making it heavy. Soft lights illumined the rooms; and he had a sense of flowers everywhere about him.

They passed a curtained entrance, and when Li Wo drew the curtain aside, Fow Ming saw a tiny chamber with a weird little seated Buddha at the farther end of it, between two columns, and in front of the idol burned a pair of candles. It was these which poured the fragrance through the house. Fow Ming recognized that scent and knew it was of great price.

The curtain fell across the face of the god, and they went on. Every room was small but pleasantly furnished. Clean mattings covered the floors; screens of flowered work sheltered the doorways. Suddenly they came out upon a little rock garden fenced with a lofty stone wall on either side. It covered the top of the river embankment, screened from it by thick willows and poplars planted in a row, and yet through the trees one could make out the glint of the black face of the water.

The lantern which the master of the house had carried was now taken from him by one servant. Others approached with new and pleasanter lights, screened by shades of painted paper so that they looked like beautiful, self-illumined butterflies. These were hung here and there so that the light they shed would not glare in the eyes of host or guest. A new, delicate aroma filled the air. Fow Ming guessed that the light was given by costly, scented candles even like those which burned before the face of the Buddha.

In the meantime rugs were swiftly brought, unrolled, and cushions placed upon them. Covered cups of guest tea were brought, and all was managed in such silence and with such speed that it was like domestic magic. Fow Ming knew a well-ordered household when he saw one, and he looked with a new respect upon the dapper little man who sat with him.

Then food began to appear for the evening meal, and it was a feast. First soup made of sea slugs. Then chicken minced soft and flavored with pork. Next came flour balls cooked in sugar, fish brains, a wonderful dish composed solely of the tongues of ducks, and at least a dozen confections, beginning with candied bamboo root.

The two Chinamen drank with this meal rice wine, at first, and afterward hot samshu, in little bowls.

After the meal had ended, pipes were brought and lighted with glowing coals. The men reclined at ease, puffing at clumsy mouthpieces and watching silver fluctuations of the fountain which played in the center of the little garden. The evening air was warm and still; stars stood low in the sky, and from the farther side of the embankment they could hear the continual lapping of water.

In this time of tranquillity, Fow Ming looked into his knowledge of his friend and his heart was softened. His daughter had been demanded by Li Wo for marriage with young Ching Wo. But she was Fow's only child, and Fow hated the thought of parting with her. So he had come down the

river to visit the household of his friend, according to the proverb which he now repeated:

"Li Wo, the face of a man may be silent, but the house of a man is never done speaking. Everything that I have seen is pleasant. But why do you not let me see your son?"

CHAPTER IV

It was the question which, of course, Li Wo had been awaiting for a long time, but now he put the thing away, as in courtesy bound.

For he said: "Your politeness, my friend, has two right hands. But I cannot allow you to see the boy now when you are tired and are thinking only of sleep."

"If he is here, let him come in," was Fow Ming's response.

Li touched a gong, rubbing it with the tips of his fingers, and bringing a faint hum of music from the thin metal. Instantly a servant slipped from the shadows and stood before him.

"Is my son here?"

"He is here. He has been here for an hour."

"How is he occupied now?"

"As always at this time, he is studying."

"Tell him to come to me at once."

The servant disappeared. And Fow Ming questioned: "May I speak to you freely, friend?"

"Speak to me freely," said Li Wo. "If you are to become his second father, you should know him as well as I can teach you."

"Then," said Fow, "it appears to me that a young man should find his place in his home every day. Does he wander out at night, by himself?"

"He goes often down the river to the house of a friend, who is a great teacher. That is where he has been for the last few days, while I was in San Francisco."

"He is a student, then?"

"He will one day be a distinguished scholar," said Li Wo, with a flash entering his eye.

"And he studies when he returns to his house?"

"He studies here also."

"This steals a boy's health," Fow Ming remarked. "But here he comes."

Ching Wo, the son of Li, came slowly into the garden, bowed very low before his father, and remained bowed until Li spoke a careless word. After that he greeted the guest, and then drew back a little and remained with his head slightly dropped.

He looked like what his father had called him—a scholar. It seemed that a confined life had made him very pale, so that, for the color of his skin, he might have passed for an Italian as well as for a Chinaman. He was a handsome youngster, even by Western standards, with just a touch of weariness in his eyes.

The young man was told to sit down, and he obeyed in silence, keeping his eyes so fixed upon the floor that Fow Ming was able to turn upon Li Wo a glance expressive of his open admiration.

"How is it," Fow Ming asked the boy, "that you stay so much in your father's house, when there is such a great world outside of it?"

The boy looked up, but at his father, not at the guest.

"You may answer him," said Li Wo.

"Without going out of doors, we can know the whole world," replied Ching Wo.

"Ha!" Fow Ming started a little. "What is it you say?"

"They are not my words," answered the boy. "They are the words of Lao Tzu."

"Do you know many of his words, my son?" asked Fow Ming, looking steadily at the youngster.

"A great sun may shine through a narrow window," was the reply, "and a small bird may listen to the river flowing."

Said Fow Ming: "If you live only with teachers and books, it will be hard for you to find a place for yourself in the world."

"If I have learned patience," the boy answered, "perhaps it will help me when I must begin to work in the world."

"Patience is a great strength," agreed Fow Ming, "but there are some things, perhaps, which can be learned only with force. Like the handling of nettles are some problems in life, my son."

"If that is so," said the boy, "I shall be glad to know how to do such things as you describe."

Fow Ming regarded him with an open nod of approval. "And your books have given you some ambition in the world, Ching Wo? You wish to be a rich prince, I suppose?"

"I wish to be a merchant," answered Ching Wo. "It is my father's wish."

"Ha!" said the visitor. "Are his wishes yours?"

The boy lifted his head a little. "I am his son."

The other nodded, and began to cough a little, as though to cover a momentary embarrassment.

"Is that all?" asked the father.

"It is sufficient," said Li Wo. "You are tired," he added, "and therefore you may go to your bed at once."

With bows as profound as those with which he had entered, Ching Wo departed again from the garden, moving backward like a courtier from the presence of a king, until he was in the shadow of the house, and then noiselessly disappearing.

Fow Ming inquired with a smile: "Are you an emperor, Li Wo, and is that one of your slaves?"

At this moment there was a sudden outburst of gunfiring up the river in the main portion of the town of Buffalo Flat. As the shooting died down they heard plainly a single voice raised in a long, pealing screech of terror and pain.

Fow Ming started to his feet, but, instantly recovering himself, sat down again. Then he remarked to his impassive host by way of apology for his lack of self-control:

"After I had talked to your son, it seemed to me, Li Wo, that we were all back in the kingdom of beauty and of peace, our own country, and the guns and the cry were like the sudden work of dragons in your garden. Well—in what way have you managed to raise such a son in such a country, where the fools and the barbarians are all about him?"

"By patience." An almost evil exultation came into Li Wo's face. "From the day of his birth I have worked to make him what I would have him be. The labor is not quite finished, but at least I think you can see him as he will be!"

Fow Ming responded with enthusiasm: "I never have seen a young man who seemed more virtuous. It is only possible that he is too delicate. Yet I see that his finger nails are not long!"

"That is true," answered Li Wo. "His finger nails are not long. I intend him to be a merchant. I intend that he shall sail many oceans. Therefore, I have taught him to grow up,

expecting no life of books in the future, even if he should begin with many books now. He is to work, even with his hands when his life depends upon them."

At this, Fow Ming made a gesture with both hands, sweeping outward. "Li Wo, I expected to stay here many days, studying your son and trying to learn what his heart might be, but I think I have seen enough to please me forever. If you still are willing, he shall be my daughter's husband."

"Good!" said Li Wo. "At what time, my brother?"

"She is fifteen," Fow Ming explained, "and it is high time that she should be married. But tell me, brother—will she be the only woman in this house? Will there be no mother-in-law to teach her wise ways?"

"If she is your daughter," answered Li Wo, "she has been well taught, and I have no fear for the future of her life with my son. Are we agreed in everything? But no. You should spend more days with me. You should see the boy again and again. It is not easy to judge so quickly."

"I have seen enough," said Fow Ming firmly. "And now, friend, since you are tired I must leave you and go to bed."

So saying, he touched the cup of guest tea with the tips of his fingers. A steward came out with a double lantern on a bamboo stick to light the honored visitor to his chamber, and the host went with him.

At the chamber which had been assigned to him, Fow Ming went in with many a bow to his host, and the door was closed.

Then Li Wo went back into the garden. He stood in the dark of the poplars and willows along the water's edge, and called quietly. Instantly Ching Wo came from the trees and stood before him.

"It is ended?" asked Ching Wo

The father raised one hand slowly above his head, an inexpressible gesture of triumph.

"It is done!" he exclaimed. "It is done! The fool has walked into the trap, and he is entangled so completely that there never will be any escape for him. My dear boy, we shall sit up for a little while together and drink hot samshu and talk of the difference between fools and wise men!"

CHAPTER V

A FLARE of wind made the nearest of the lanterns swing, and by the flash of light Li Wo saw in the face of Ching pity, horror and disgust. It brought the teeth of Li together with a click. He snapped his lean fingers so that they rattled together.

"What is the word in your mind?" he exclaimed. "Speak quickly! What evil word is on your lips to speak about your father?"

"There is no word," said the boy slowly, "but there is sorrow, sorrow, sorrow!"

"And for what, boy?"

"He is your guest, and you will trick him; he is your friend, and you will shame him!"

"The devils of the white men have entered you!" cried Li Wo. "You speak to your father as they speak to theirs. They—the wolves—who pull down and eat the weak and the aged! This is the wisdom of Lao Tzu which you talked! This is the Way, of which you have learned!"

"I do not mean to speak against you," protested the boy. "But I am sick in my heart!"

"You are sick with hatred of your

father. Everything he does is abominable to you, and you scorn him!"

Ching Wo was silent, whereupon his father demanded angrily: "Say it quickly! It is true!"

The boy said in his quietly musical voice:

"If I hate you, do I not hate myself?"

"These are mere words you have learned out of books. But what is the use of knowledge that never enters the heart? Your lips have become clever. You have learned to play a part to deceive me!"

To this Ching Wo answered in the same subdued and gentle fashion: "Is there one truth that our people know? It is that the spirits of our ancestors guard us and watch over us, if we give them honor. I am not worthy, but I am not a fool and a dog!"

Li Wo suddenly changed in his manner. Either his heart had altered or else he was controlling himself with care.

"Consider what I have done for you, Ching," said he. "I am marrying you to the daughter of a rich man. You will soon be surrounded by servants who do not need to be paid with stolen money. There will be no more raiding by night, and you can lead the life of an honest man!"

"An honest man?" the boy answered sadly. "Oh, my father, what honesty is there in such a life, which is built on a lie?"

"On what lie?" asked Li Wo, controlling his temper.

"We have pretended to Fow Ming that you are a merchant."

"Am I not a merchant?" the other retorted hastily. "I have my goods on sale. That is enough for the world to know about me and my work."

"And how have you got the money to buy the goods which you sell?" asked the son.

"By the wits and the strong hand of my son," Li Wo replied. "How could there be a better way?"

Ching Wo was again silent, and looked upon the ground, with his hands thrust into the alternate sleeves.

At last he said: "And if Fow Ming should learn the truth?"

"Of what use will the truth be to him, after he has let you take his daughter?"

The boy sighed.

"And why do you sigh?" asked Li Wo.

"I have no wish to marry, father."

"You are young," said Li Wo, "and you are a fool. But you are old enough to know that I am wiser than you. Therefore, you will do as I say!"

"I hear whispers in the street behind me," the boy commented. "There are people near us who have wider eyes than you think. Some day they may find us out!"

"They never will find us out. As I have arranged this matter, everything is perfect. You are free now to go to your bed. To-morrow Fow Ming will return to San Francisco to prepare his daughter for the marriage. After that, she will be sent down to you."

The boy bowed, drew back a step, paused.

"Have you something else to say?"

"Yes. All the way down the river on the ship, I wished to speak to you, but I did not dare. In San Francisco I saw a list of people who are coming on the next ship. It will be there in a week, perhaps."

"How could such news have come?"

"It was brought in by the Flying Cloud, which sailed a few days after the other vessel. I read the list of names."

"What did you find there?"

Ching Wo hesitated. "*I found there the name of our greatest enemy!*"

The father, puzzled for a moment, suddenly uttered a faint cry. And he stood before the boy with both hands extended, and his face twitching with a half savage and a half frightened eagerness. "What is the name?"

"Malcom Foster."

"Coming here? Coming into our hands, Ching Wo?"

The boy drew a breath. "If all the work I had to do were half as pleasant to me as the thought of finding Malcom Foster, the whole year would be April and May for me, if only—"

"Ah?" said Li Wo.

"If only I could be sure!"

"Of what thing, my son?"

"Oh, my father," declared the boy, "I should speak to you reverently, and if my words are not pleasant, I should be silent."

"Nevertheless," said Li Wo, "speak freely and clearly for this moment, at least. What is troubling you?"

"You have often told me," Ching Wo explained, "that Captain Foster caused my mother's death. In all that you have taught me, you have kept his name in my mind. And if—"

"Is it wrong that you should hate your mother's murderer?"

"You have told me other things, at other times—not of him—and often they have not proved to be true. When I first saw his name in the list and knew he was coming here, my heart leaped. I told myself that he was coming to death; my hand would hold the knife; I would kill him slowly and talk to him while he died. Thinking of that, I was happy. But then I remembered the other things you have spoken of, which have not been truth, and I have been sad and in doubt ever since!"

As though the shock of this had almost unnerved him, Li Wo went a half pace backward, until his right hand touched the smooth trunk of a young poplar. Against this he braced himself, and the narrow head of the tree trembled.

"Am I a liar in the eyes of my son?" he gasped at Ching Wo.

The boy did not speak, but his face was contorted with pain. Great beads of sweat gleamed on his forehead.

Li Wo threw both his hands above his head. "If I have lied," he cried in a choking, almost sobbing voice, "may the sky open and a river of lightnings fall on my head! If he was not the murderer, and if my own eyes did not see the murder, may I be stricken to ashes! Oh, Ching Wo, Ching Wo," he added sadly, "it is true that I have spoken a great many evil things, and things that did not have truth in them. But it was he who forced me to it. It was he who made me a starving beggar, and forced me to steal. If I have done evil, it is his evil. It falls back upon his head. Ching Wo, now I shall swear—"

But Ching Wo held up a hand in protest. Then he dropped upon his knees and begged forgiveness, whereupon Li grasped the hands of the kneeling boy and raised him up.

"You have committed a sin against your father," said he, "but if it were twenty times as great a sin, there still is blood enough in the body of Malcom Foster to wash it all away. It is not a murder. It is not even revenge. It is a sacrifice. The spirit of your mother will be made to smile. How can we tell? She may at this moment be standing in this garden listening to us, and pitying me because I have a son who cannot have faith in his father's word!"

The boy, at this, threw a startled look around him; and a gleam of satisfaction appeared in the eyes of Li. They parted at once, Ching returning to the house.

Li walked up and down through the garden. He was both worried and delighted. Worried by the questions which the boy had asked of him, and delighted that he had been able to parry and postpone the answers.

Sometimes he felt, when he dealt with young Ching Wo, that he was literally dealing with a thunderbolt which might well consume the wielder if he were not in the highest degree careful. But he felt also that he had acquired such skill in this task that he could continue it indefinitely.

So Li Wo laughed a little as he walked up and down in the dim light of the garden. He braced back his shoulders, and breathed more deeply, as befits a man who has won a great battle.

At last he went into the house, but before going to bed he looked into his son's room, and found that Ching Wo was not there!

Alarmed, he searched through several rooms until at last he peeped into the chapel, where he beheld Ching Wo, face down upon the floor, with arms stretched beyond his head, so lost in supplication that he looked like one dead.

At this, the keen face of Li Wo flashed into the most evil of smiles. He let the curtain fall back softly over the incense-laden air of the chapel and over the worshipper. Then he withdrew to his own chamber.

More than once, as he was preparing for sleep, the father interrupted himself with musings and with a noiseless laughter. Toward the end, something troubled him sufficiently to make him get up and take from a silver box a quantity of slips of thin yellow paper, punched full of holes and covered with inscriptions.

He opened the window, and as a breeze was blowing up the river, he loosed the paper from his hand and watched it go off like a thick flight of birds.

This bit of sacrifice to the evil ones being accomplished, Li Wo lingered at the window for a moment, listening to the far-off sounds of celebration from the dance halls of Buffalo Flat. Then he went back to bed, and fell at once into a sound, sweet sleep, untroubled by any dream of good or of evil.

CHAPTER VI.

Fow Ming and Li Wo departed the next morning for San Francisco. They were to inform the bride of her approaching wedding and to make all of the arrangements. At the last moment, the bridegroom would be wanted and should appear. In the meantime he was at liberty.

Ching Wo accompanied his father and Fow Ming down to the boat, as in duty bound, and saw them aboard. He waited by the dock until the steamer had gone off, her stern paddle-wheel flashing in a great arc behind her. Then Ching Wo turned away and mingled with the crowd.

Hardly had he done so when Sheriff Lefty Wilson approached him through the jostling people and laid a hand on his arm.

"I want you, Chink," said the sheriff.

Ching Wo looked upon him with an innocent surprise. "Wantee me?"

"I want you," repeated the sheriff. "You come along, kid, an' don't you make no fuss."

A hale and red-faced merchant of Buffalo Flat had overheard the words of the arrest, and now he tapped the sheriff's shoulder.

"You're makin' a mistake, Lefty," said he.

"What kind of mistake?" demanded the sheriff, who was a man of firmly fixed purpose.

"I'll tell you what kind. This kid

"You Hit Out With the Truth or Into the Jail You Go!"

is the son of Li Wo. There ain't a straighter Chink in the world than Li, an' the kid never has made no trouble in the world."

"All right," answered the sheriff, "then I'd like to know why he's usin' Handsome Harry Delancey's diamond stickpin to fasten up the neck of his shirt, there?"

There was a gasp of surprise from the merchant. "It ain't possible."

"Ain't it?" inquired the sheriff. "Once I had occasion to look at all of Harry underneath his mask, in particular that pin. I reckoned that I might need to know the face of it some other day, an' dog-gone me if I wasn't right!"

Wilson laughed loudly as he said this.

"Well," said the merchant, "he might of bought it from somebody, you know. He might of bought it an' thought no harm."

"All right," said the sheriff. "I ain't sayin' that he's the blood-brother of Handsome Harry, am I? I just want to find out who he got that pin from."

It was a good diamond, of the purest water, and large in size. Brilliantly it flashed upon the black-shirted bosom of the boy, who looked down at it with a sort of innocent wonder, while he was carried off by the sheriff.

No crowd formed about them. A "damn' Chink" was not worth even a momentary consideration. And so

they crossed to the jail, and in the sheriff's own office that gentleman sat him down with his prisoner.

"What's your name?"

"Ching Wo."

"Ching, where you get that pin?"

"My father, he give me."

"What for he give you, Ching? You talk up straight to me, an' it'll be the better for you. You may of heard that I'm the Chinaman's friend. An' I live up to the word. Yaller or white or black, the color of a skin don't make no difference to me. Wherefrom you get that pin, Ching Wo?"

"My father, Li Wo, he give me."

"What for he give it to you, Ching? Because of what he give it to you?"

"Me tlenty-two year' old," said Ching, and smiled with pride as he said it.

"He give you a pin with a diamond in it like that for a birthday present, did he? Why dog-gone my hide if I thought Li Wo had the money to dash off things like that. It don't hardly sound nacheral at all to me. Ching, where *he* get the pin?"

"Not understand," said Ching Wo.

"The devil you don't!" answered Lefty Wilson, who had the eye of a hunter of beasts and men. "The devil you don't understand. The fact is, you know all about it. You know the shop he bought it from, and the man that sold it to him!"

Ching Wo stared blankly.

"Look here, Ching," said the sheriff, "I aim to take a fancy to you. You're too young to do no harm. You ain't the kind of Chink that makes any trouble. I know the whole gang in your side of the town, an' them that wears knives, an' all of the rest. But I reckon you ain't that kind. I've always had a good report about you. You mind your business; you keep your face shut; they say you're gunna be a great Chinese scholar one of these days. Well, maybe you are, an' I hope you will be. But it ain't gunna hurt your chances to tell me the truth about that pin. Understand?"

Ching Wo looked in a frightened, puzzled manner at the ceiling and then back at the face of the sheriff, very earnestly.

"Ching Wo tly understand," he replied in a soft voice.

The sheriff stood up. "You ain't gunna talk, then?"

"Ching not understand. Ching want to talk allee same!" said the boy, trembling.

"Now, by God," thundered the sheriff, "you hit out with the truth, or into the jail you go, even if you gotta rot there!"

The eyes of Ching grew wider and wider until it seemed that his very soul could be seen through such capacious windows. But even though his lips parted not a word came forth.

The sheriff paused. He was obviously worried, and suddenly he shouted loudly: "Pete!"

"Hey?" grumbled a voice from the next room.

"Pete, come in here."

Pete Greggains came, big, red-faced and red-haired.

"Pete," explained the sheriff. "Y'understand how I told you about spottin' Handsome Harry's diamond pin? Now, here I've seen it on this here yaller monkey. He says he don't know nothin', he ain't seen nothin', his pa give it to him for a birthday present! What'd you do about it?"

Pete grinned with evil intention. "I'd take a couple of yards of blacksnake an' tie it around his neck. By the time you untangled him from it, maybe he'd remember somethin' else!"

"Aye," said the sheriff sourly. "That'd be your way, but it ain't mine."

He was a tall, lean, bony man, was Lefty Wilson, with a prominent Adam's apple that wavered up and down his wrinkled, sun-tanned throat when he talked. It wavered now, as he regarded the boy.

Ching Wo seemed to have understood enough of this conversation to make him shrink back against the wall, and there he looked from one to the other of the white men. He clasped his hands together, not in supplication, but in utter terror.

"Aw, I dunno," Pete muttered.

He strode up to Ching Wo, and towered above him, and then took the breast of the shirt in his large grasp and looked at the pin.

"It's a hummer," said he. "I dunno. Why not soak the Chink into jail until his pa comes back from 'Frisco? It won't cost you nothin', an' you might work somethin' out of him."

The sheriff hesitated. "Well, I guess you're right. I hate to do it. I'd most rather to kick a dog than this here poor kid, because his skin is yaller."

"They say that he ain't so simple as he looks," said Pete.

At this both he and the sheriff looked firmly upon the prisoner. The wide, empty, frightened eyes of the boy turned from one to the other, as though he were trying to read his death sentence in a completely foreign language.

The sheriff spat upon the floor. "I guess I gotta do it. If it was any trail besides that of Handsome Harry, I wouldn't bother none. Search him, Pete, an' stick him into a decent cell, will you? I sorta hate this here business, damn me if I don't! But Handsome Harry—I'd like to know what shop he's sellin' his jewelry to. Why, Pete, if you come right down to it, it means somethin' that Harry is sellin' his jewelry at all!"

"It *does* mean somethin'," agreed the jailer. "I'll handle the kid easy enough."

With this he "fanned" the boy.

That is to say, he passed his hands over the body of Ching Wo, pressing the fingers carefully around the hips and beneath the armpits, the usual places in which weapons were carried in those days of the primitive, early West.

The jailer announced almost instantly: "He ain't got a thing. Only the pin."

"Take it an' put it in the drawer of my desk," said the sheriff. "Then shove the kid into a cell, an' come back an' join me. I got something else to talk about, out here in front. I'll be sittin' on the steps. The sun ain't too hot, this time of day!"

Pete removed the pin. Then he took from the wall a set of strong new handcuffs which fitted over the round wrists of Ching Wo. After he had secured the prisoner in this fashion Pete led him into the cell room and showed him into a steel-barred cell. The door of this he slammed with a heavy clangor.

"There ain't anybody else around to keep you company, kid," said he. "But you'll be all right when your dad comes back—if he's willin' to talk a little. Take it easy. Don't you worry none."

But Ching Wo had thrown himself face downward on the soiled coverlet of the cot and did not raise his head to answer.

TO BE CONTINUED

What Operator Writes the Finest "Fist"?

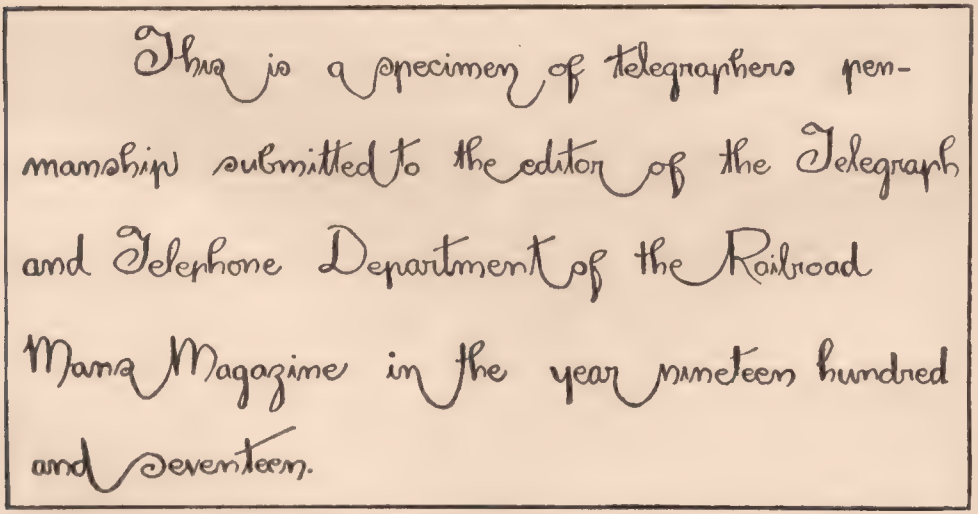
RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE Offers Three Awards in Competition Open to All Telegraphers

WHAT telegraph operator, or ex-operator, to-day has the fastest, most legible telegraphic "fist"? RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE is bent on finding out. This publication has heard it said that the operator of to-day, with his penmanship, is nothing to compare with the old-timers who thrived before the typewriters came into general use.

We are not quite willing to concede to the idea that the operator with the beautiful penmanship has passed almost completely out of the picture.

Accordingly, RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE has decided to throw open an international competition for "ops." Three handsome awards will go to the winners who can convince the judges that they write the best and fastest telegraphic "fists" in the world.

Thirteen years ago—back in 1917—this magazine conducted a "fist" contest which met with surprising results. Hundreds of operators contributed in an effort to win the honorable mention and the year's subscription which went to the victors. At that time Benjamin H. Tidrick, of Davenport, Iowa, walked off with first honors on the specimen of penmanship which we reproduce below. The judges then made the announcement that Mr. Tidrick won because his handwriting showed the most graceful lines, the


This is a specimen of telegraphers pen-
manship submitted to the editor of the Telegraph
and Telephone Department of the Railroad
Mans Magazine in the year nineteen hundred
and seventeen.

This Specimen, Written by Benjamin H. Tidrick, Won First Prize in the Contest Conducted Back in 1917

greatest speed possibilities, the best letter formation.

Second place honors, in that day, went to W. W. Spafford, of Chicago, Illinois, while F. R. Plunkett, an operator on the old Canadian Government Railway, Fort William, Canada, won third place. Hundreds of other operators were in on that contest, and a goodly number of those men may still be available to compete now.

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE is offering something worth while in its awards, too. The man whose handwriting is judged the best will receive a silver plaque on which will be reproduced the specimen of his "fist" together with his name and the date of the award. This will be a trophy to treasure. Second place will be awarded a bronze plaque and to the operator who takes third honors will go a copper plaque.

This competition is open to both sexes. It begins with this announcement, and will close at 12.01 P.M., October 1. The points on which the handwriting will be judged are speed possibilities, letter formation, alignment and neatness. There are only a few simple rules to follow. The rest is up to you.

The Rules

1. The entrant must now be, or must have been, a telegraph operator, either railroad or commercial.

2. The entrant must fill in the entry blank printed herewith, or a copy of it, and supply the information requested therein.

3. A specimen of the entrant's handwriting must accompany the blank. The writing must be in black ink on unruled white paper 8½ inches wide and 5½ inches deep and must be written the long way of the sheet.

4. The entrant must submit the following paragraph in his own handwriting, together with the entry blank, or a copy of it:

The distinct success of the new RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE *is due to its complete and exclusive presentation of the quick drama and high romance of railroading.*

5. The entry blank, or a copy, with the specimen of the handwriting, must be received in the office of the Editor of the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE before 12.01 P.M. of October 1, 1930.

6. The name and address of the entrant must be written clearly on the reverse side of the submitted specimen.

THE ENTRY BLANK

TELEGRAPHIC "FIST" EDITOR,
RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE,
280 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY.

In accordance with the rules prescribed by RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE in its competition for the finest specimen of telegraph operator's handwriting, I herewith submit my own script and my notification of entry. It is understood that the decision of the Board of Judges, appointed by the magazine, shall be final.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

Years employed as an operator.....

Railroad.....*Commercial*.....

Present occupation.....
(Give title if in official capacity)

Employer.....

Signature.....

Shooting Grain Cars Over the Neebing Yard Hump at Fort William, Ont.

The Sun Sets on the Hump Rider

Advance of Mechanical Devices to Control Cars in Classification Yards Is Wiping Out Rail Pioneer

By Earle W. Gage

IT was only the other day that I saw him, dark in outline against the rose glow in the west, standing there with his hickory brake club on the "b" end of a box car that was nosing down the incline of the hump. This to me was a picture charged with drama and about it there was something of poignancy, for I was looking on a figure who would soon be passing completely from the railroad picture. Another sure victim of the march of progress and efficiency. Another great actor on the railroad stage whose place already is being taken by mechanical contraptions.

The rider of the hump, fearless,

stout-hearted, sure-footed! There have been fewer more colorful men on the railroad horizon. From coast to coast in the other days, when the boomer was in his prime, you would see him coming and going, grabbing a job here or there. He was hard as nails, boisterous, rowdy most times. He was ready for a fight or a fiesta and perhaps he took wild chances with his life and with railroad property, but the hump rider was an institution to which we all attach deep sentiment, and now that something is coming along to remove him from the inclines, over which the yard goats shove the cars for the classification tracks in the yards below, we find a little moisture in the eyes.

General View of Retarder-Equipped Hump at the Boston & Maine Yards in Mechanicsville, N. Y. Showing the Control Towers and the Classification Tracks

At the classification yards, where freight trains are made up ready for their trip over the line, locomotives still boost the cars over the "hump," but electrical contrivances operate compressed track brakes, and bring the cars to a stop at the desired spot without the aid of a rider. Not only has this new equipment increased the capacity of the yards where it is installed, by accelerating the switching, but it has also radically reduced expense, and totally abolished personal injuries by eliminating entirely the car riders and switch tenders of old. A man cannot become injured if there is no man to get hurt. Traffic engineers advise that this is the most important improvement in railroad operation in the United States so far this century.

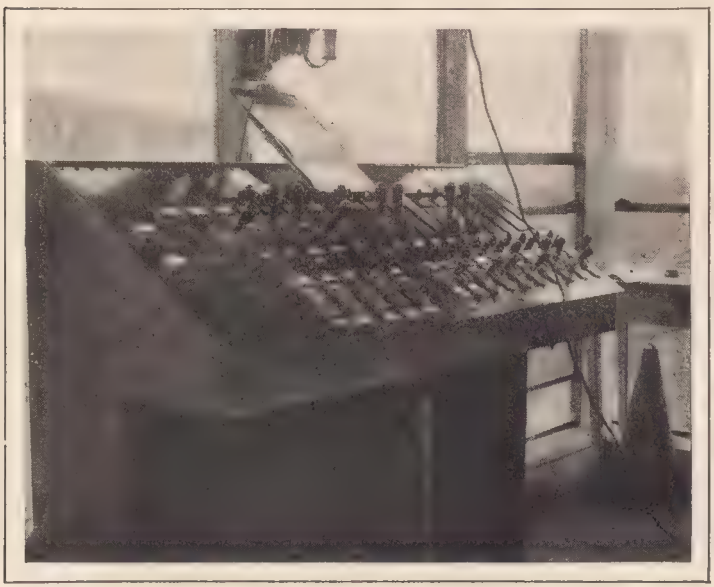
The idea of the electrically operated car retarding system was perfected by George Hannaeur, late president of the Boston and Maine, when he worked for the New York Central Lines.

The car retarder is a track brake. In effect it is nothing more than the common airbrake of commerce, made over and attached to the rails. But back of it all is a mighty interesting story—a story which every man engaged in modern mechanics will thoroughly enjoy.

The Control Box From Which Movements Are Directed

Twenty Years in the Making

More than twenty years ago Hannaeur endeavored to evolve something along the line of a track brake. The net result was a very good apparatus. The only drawback was that it would not work. Outside of that it was pretty good. However, there was the germ of an idea still hatching away, and he simply wrapped the idea up in a piece of cloth and hung it in a closet for more than a dozen years. All this time the yeast was working in his mind, and he kept right on picturing a day when it would not be necessary for men to ride cars over the "hump" and other men to endanger their lives, throwing switches while trains were being made up.



This Is the Equipment That the Tower-Man Handles in Working the Retarders

Like the villain in the melodrama, the idea still pursued Hannaeur until he simply could not elude it. Therefore, he was forced to purchase some tools and pencils and drawing paper and similar supplies, and get busy. He took up the task where he left off before, and

When the B. & M. Retarder System Went into Service This Gathering Watched the Cars as They Were Held in Check on the Hump

soon had working models which, while not completed, served to show the possibilities of the equipment. These were exhibited to the president of the New York Central, who thought there was a chance of developing a successful track brake with the aid of some money.

"A good chance to win?" asked the president.

"A fair chance," replied Hannauer with a shade of conservatism.

Thus, the sum of $25,000 was set aside for promotion and tests. The mechanical staff of the system was also put to work to back up the tests. A long and laborious series of experiments was initiated. But the difficulty of derailments cropped up, and had not been overcome by the time the $25,000 melted. Real progress had been made, however, and the president of the New York Central was now really enthused. He set aside $50,000 for further experiments. More work and more sweat, and finally victory crowned the endeavor. The car retarder was born.

When that first classification yard had been fully equipped, it was a weird and ghostly place to visit. Railroad men from all over the world came to gaze upon the new child that promised to perform a Titan's task in traffic management. They saw a string of cars loom up on the crest of the hump. The locomotive, of course, would be down at the other end of the string, out of sight and sound. As the string flowed over the crest it would disintegrate noiselessly into cuts of one or more cars, each pursuing the even tenor of its way without crowding the car ahead or lagging in the way of the car behind, down the incline, along the leads and into its own classification track, never banging into standing cars, but approaching politely with just force enough to couple, and all without a human being in sight!

One Left of an Army

If you investigated closer you might eventually discover a lonely figure on the hump cutting off cars. One man where dozens had been before. His nearest neighbor is another lonely figure in a birdcage on stilts halfway down the hump. This man perches on a high stool facing a typewritten switch list and some rows of diminutive levers which he manipulates from time to time by a slight twist of the wrist. That is all he and four other retarder operators in similar glass cages farther down in the yard have to do to take the place of that former great array of car riders and switch tenders. It transpires that these five cages are so placed that a car moving anywhere in the yard is always under direct observation and instant control of one of the operators.

Classification has been stepped up to such a degree that almost unbelievable quantities of cars are shuffled under the new plan with only a corporal's guard of men at the machines. By old methods seventy-seven men were needed to put 1,411 cars over the hump in twenty-four hours in one particular yard. That was a very good average, too. One car each sixty-one seconds, or thirteen and one-third cars per man for the twenty-four hours' work. But with the car retarders in full operation, ten men now put 1,042 cars over the hump in eight hours, which is an average of a car each twenty-seven seconds, or 104 cars per man.

On one day 152 cars of merchandise were classified over the hump, using car retarders, in fifty-two minutes, which is an average of a car each twenty and a half seconds. Again,

seventy cars of coal were classified in sixteen minutes, an average of a car each 13.7 seconds.

These remarkable results are accomplished by the simple combination of compressed air and electricity. The air does the hard work while the electricity merely controls the air valves through the manipulation of the little levers in the signal cabins. The electrical apparatus is most precise and accurate, and was devised in the laboratories of the General Electric Company, which institution has installed scores of the machines in many parts of the country.

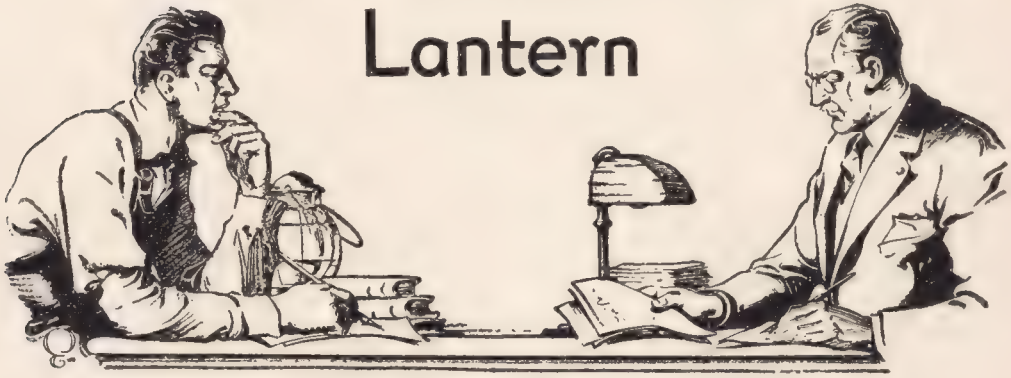
Typical Control Tower from Which Operations on the Classification Tracks Are Manipulated and Observed

The car retarder itself consists of movable bars in lengths of eight to ten feet, assembled in units of thirty-two to forty feet, arranged in pairs on either side of each rail, as shown in the accompanying illustrations. By means of compressed air cylinders and a system of levers, these pairs of bars can be closed like a vise on both sides of all wheels passing between them. Pressure of the bars against the wheels can be modulated from 110 pounds to twenty pounds at the will of the operator, as may be required to handle anything from an empty to a seventy-ton car of coal. The retarder is so powerful that a car can be stopped and held on the hump incline.

In one yard, on the incline, 240 feet of retarders are arranged in seven units, with space between each, and give the first operator control of movements down the hump. Distributed at points throughout the yard are forty-four other units operated by four other men.

The retarders are arranged in both single and double units. In the double rail unit, braking power is applied to wheels on both rails. Single units are applied to one rail only on leads where frogs and switches would interfere with a double unit. No longer does a car "run wild" in the classification yard, "kiss" a car of glassware, and result in a loss of property or the rider's life.

By the Light of the Lantern



WE want to be as useful as possible to our readers, but, because of the great popularity of this department, we are obliged to impose certain restrictions. It is limited to the answering of questions of an informative, technical, or historical nature only. Letters concerning positions WILL NOT be answered. All letters should be signed with the full name of the writer, as an indication of his good faith. We will print only his initials. The editor begs that readers sending in questions will not be disappointed if the answers do not appear as early as expected. Delays are often unavoidable for two reasons: the magazine is printed two months in advance of the date of issue, and it frequently takes weeks to secure correct answers, owing to the complexity of the questions.

L. P., Helena, Mont.—The largest locomotive in service on the Missouri Pacific Railroad is class 4000, an articulated Mallet, 2-8-8-2 type, which is used in hump service at Dupo, Illinois. This engine has a tractive effort of 94,400 pounds and its cylinders are 26 inches and 40 inches x 32 inches. It carries a steam pressure of 200 pounds and is equipped with two Bethlehem Auxiliary Locomotives which bring the total tractive effort of the engine and tender to 122,400 pounds. The total weight of the engine is 453,000 pounds and of tender 305,500 pounds.

The largest freight locomotive in road service on the Missouri Pacific carries the road numbers 1720 to 1728. They are of the 2-10-2 type, have a tractive effort of 81,600 pounds and their cylinders are 30 inches x 32 inches. They carry 210 pounds of steam and the total weight of engine and tender is 726,150 pounds.

The largest locomotive used on the Soo Line is their N-20 class which is of the mountain type. This locomotive has a tractive effort of 53,900 pounds without the booster and 63,900 pounds with the booster. It has cylinders 27 x 30 and 60-inch drive wheels. The weight on the drivers in working order is 227,500 pounds and the total weight of the engine is 338,700 pounds. This engine may be used either in fast passenger or fast freight service. The Soo Line has three of them in operation.

The largest car owned by the Soo Line in passenger service has a length over all of 84 feet 2 3-4 inches and is a combination buffet and observation car with the solarium on the rear end. Its weight is 176,000 pounds and it is numbered in series 760 to 763. Its official title is Sun Parlor-Lounge Room.

HOW many engines of the 5500 series does the B. & O. have, and who built them? Also how many of the Mallet type does that road use?—E. M., Petersburg, Ind.

The Baltimore and Ohio has two locomotives of the 5500 series—the "Lord Baltimore" and the "Phillip E. Thomas." The 5500's were built by the B. & O. Company's forces at the Mount Clare shops in Baltimore. At the time of their building these 5500's were the largest passenger locomotives in the country. The engines are used in hauling westward and eastward passenger trains over the mountains between Grafton and Keyser, West Virginia.

The B. & O. employs 132 Mallet type locomotives which were purchased from both the American Locomotive Works and the Baldwin Locomotive Works.

J. P., West Branch, Iowa—The largest type locomotives used in freight service by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company is the 5000 class, a 4-8-4 type built by the American Locomotive Company at Schenectady, New York. This engine has a tractive effort of 66,620 pounds. These engines also are equipped with a booster which

gives them an additional tractive effort of 13,075 pounds.

The largest passenger locomotive used by the Rock Island is the 4000 series built by the American Locomotive Company at Dunkirk, New York. The tractive effort is 50,430 pounds. These engines weigh 254,500 pounds on the drivers, while the 5000 class weighs 266,500 pounds on the drivers.

H. E., Phillipsburg, N. J.—There are two types of the 200 class locomotives on the Central Railroad of New Jersey. On the latest type the weight on the drivers is 163,500 pounds, the driver diameter is 63 inches, the tractive effort 30,940 pounds and the steam pressure 200 pounds. Its wheel arrangement is the 4-6-4 class and the total weight of engine and tender is 291,700 pounds. No photograph of this locomotive is available.

WHAT are the grade conditions on the main line of the Western Pacific Railroad from Salt Lake City to Oakland, California? Also what size and dimensions are the passenger and consolidation type locomotives and what are the present road numbers?—J. D., Corning, N. Y.

The Western Pacific has a maximum grade of one per cent over the entire line between Oakland and Salt Lake City. This is the lowest grade of any transcontinental carrier crossing a mountain range, and this construction is generally considered an excellent engineering feat. Through the Feather River Cañon, from Oroville to Portola—a distance of 116 miles—the grade is one per cent against eastward trains. This is the route over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Outside of this the line is practically level most of the distance with about five hills to cross, all of them of comparatively short distance and on none of them does the grade exceed one per cent.

The consolidation type locomotives in freight service used by the Western Pacific at the present time are numbered from 1 to 20 for one weight, and from 21 to 65 for another weight. The road employs, however, mostly Mikado and Mallet type engines in freight service. There are also a number of ten-wheel passenger locomotives which run in series from 71 to 83 and from 86 to 106. Pacific and Atlantic types, however, do the bulk of the passenger hauling on the main line.

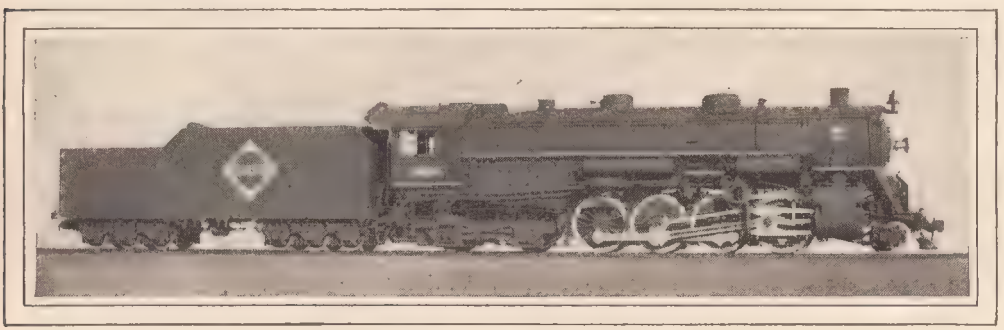
WHICH engine will haul the heavier train, a 3300 class on the Erie or a 2100 class engine on the Lackawanna?

(b) Which engine has the greater power and speed, a 2900 class engine of the Erie or a 1500 class engine of the Lackawanna?

(c) Is it true that the Erie is the fastest and greatest freight carrier in the East?—W. E. B., Hillburn, N. Y.

(a) The Erie 3300 class engine is a 2-8-4 type and is equipped with 70-inch driving wheels. Its weight on the drivers is 286,500 pounds and the total weight of the engine is 468,800 pounds. The cylinders are 28½ x 32 inches and the total wheel base, engine and tender is 91 feet 6 1-4 inches. The tractive power without the booster is 72,000 pounds and the booster gives it 13,000 pounds additional. The Lackawanna 2100 engine is a Mikado or 2-8-2 class and has a driving wheel diameter of 63 inches. This engine on drivers weighs 271,500 pounds and has the total wheel base of the engine and tender of 73 feet 2½ inches. From the dimensions, therefore, it is plain that the Erie 2-8-4 type is more powerful and the faster of the two engines. A photograph of the Erie locomotive is reproduced herewith together with a photograph of the Lackawanna Mikado.

(b) The 2900 class engine of the Erie Railroad is a Pacific or 4-6-2 type, with a cylinder 28 x 28 inches and a tractive effort of 47,200 pounds. Its driving wheels are 79 inches in diameter and its weight on the drivers is 203,480 pounds. It has a total wheel



The Erie's 2-8-4 Class Freight Hauler

D. L. & W.'s "Mike," Built for the Coal Trains

base, engine and tender, of 88 feet 3 7-8 inches. The Lackawanna 1500 class locomotive, which has been described in these columns before, has a cylinder 27 x 32 and a driving wheel diameter of 77 inches, while its weight on the drivers is 269,000 pounds and its total wheel base, engine and tender, is 82 feet 2½ inches. This locomotive has a maximum tractive effort of 64,500 pounds, which is almost half again that of the Erie Pacific. In so far as speed is concerned, the Erie locomotive doubtlessly would outrun the Lackawanna locomotive under certain tonnage and grade conditions. The Lackawanna locomotive, however, is much more powerful and better able to stand gradients and heavy trains.

(c) The Erie has a remarkable record for its freight service, but one could not say that it was either the fastest or the greatest freight carrier in the East. This railroad, however, will rank up in front with any competitor both in speed and volume of business.

R. L. D., Bryson, Texas—Locomotive No. 97, which one time was in service on the Murphy Line of the Southern Railway System, was dismantled in 1920. The song, "Wreck of the 97," refers to a train that was No. 97 and had no connection with engine 97, which was a light freight engine during its entire career. This statement is on the authority of the vice-president of the Southern Railroad.

HOW many engines has the C. & N. W. Railroad and where are their largest freight yards? Also what is the speed limit of the railroads of the United States? —F. S., Des Plaines, Ill.

The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad has a total of 1,810 coal burning locomotives. The largest freight yards are located in Chicago and these, by the way, are the largest freight yards in the world.

The speed limit on railroads in the United States is fixed by the Interstate Commerce Commission as 70 miles per hour. Of course, many times trains exceed this speed. It is the same as when we drive an automobile through villages where the speed limit is supposed to be twelve miles an hour, we sometimes run thirty, and usually nobody says anything about it.

G. B. W., Eatontown, N. J.—The apparatus which you saw on the tender of a locomotive which resembled, when in motion, the driving rods on the driving wheels of a locomotive, is known as the Bethlehem Auxiliary Locomotive and is used to give an engine additional tractive effort and pulling power. This apparatus is operated by steam from the locomotive and works in all respects exactly like the main drivers themselves.

C. W., Glendale, Cal.—The locomotives used in the north, that is in Canada, Northern Wisconsin, Minnesota and other States where heavy snows prevail, are not necessarily more powerful and heavier than those used in other sections of the Rocky Mountain region such as Nevada, Arizona and southern Colorado. Each of the main through trunk line railroads has power built to conform to individual operating conditions, so that it would be hard to make a comparison such as you desire.

In reply to your other query, the Canadian National Railroad and the Canadian Pacific are both American railways, and if you really are in earnest about wanting to know the cities that their crack trains go into we would advise you to go to your nearest ticket office and secure the schedule folders of both lines. It would take three-fourths of this magazine to print what you want to know.

T. K. B., San Francisco, Cal.—For reply to your query see answer given on page 90 to W. E. B. of Hillburn, N. Y.

"I Was Just Tryin' to Make a Hitch Out of Town," Explained Smiling

Smiling Smith Sits In

Vengeance Stalked the Rain-Washed Mountain While a Crew's Fate Hung in the "Op's" Big Hands

By Charles W. Tyler

"SMILING" SMITH, just as simple and twice as foolish looking as ever, was riding east. He had spent a not very profitable winter on the west coast, and was, in consequence, pretty seedy in his personal appearance. Having arrived at Castle Rock, western terminus of the Great Southern's Mountain Division, he proceeded to gorge himself on coffee and sinkers.

With a thin dime reposing in his britch kick as a reserve fund between himself and starvation, he essayed to ride a manifest freight out of town. Directly he came under the hostile eye of a shack whose past experiences with the fraternity of the open road had in nowise filled his heart with brotherly love for this particular breed.

He approached Smiling Smith with a scowl, while he twirled a brake stick.

"What are you riding on, brother?" the shack demanded in a tone that boded no good for the unfortunate wayfarer.

Smiling Smith's habitual and foolish grin immediately spread itself all over his simple face, something after the manner of a laughing hyena.

"Oh, nothin' much," he said, giving his shoulders a weary little jerk. He had been ditched so many times on "horstile" pikes *en route* that it had become almost a matter of simple routine.

"Nothin' much, hey?" sneered the brakeman.

"Nope. Just a ridin'."

"Oh, yeah!" The shack's jaw set at an ugly angle, and his grip on the brake stick tightened. He snarled out an oath, and raised his club. "Get off — you! Beat it, quick, before I massage the top of your lid with this!"

"All right," said Smiling Smith. "Sure." Still grinning, he angled his lanky personage toward the ladder. "Much obliged."

"What the hell are you laughin' at?" rasped the shack, torn between the urge to knock this bird for a goal and a presentiment that he was dealing with a nut.

"I dunno—just laughin'."

Fortunately Mr. Smith was agile, for all his ungainliness. He suddenly propelled himself forward, and managed to escape the blow that had been aimed at him. As he dropped from the slow-moving train, he turned his beaming countenance at the shack, causing this worthy to virtually froth at the mouth. The brakeman had dealt with all manner of bums in his time, but never a bird like this. With feet spread, coat flying in the wind and his hat cocked over one eye, he bathed the dethroned hobo with verbal sulphur and brimstone, the thought in his mind being that he might come across some epithet that would remove that damnable smirk.

It was of no use, however; and had the shack but known it, he might have saved himself valuable breath; for Smiling Smith had been born with that selfsame grin on his homely face, and, though better men than his nibs had tried it, none had ever been able to make a satisfactory job of wiping it off.

As the seedy wanderer turned away from the trundling string of cars that were clattering by him, a heavy hand fell on his shoulder, and he found himself in the toils of the railroad police.

"All right, bo," pronounced the voice of the bull gruffly, "let's take a little walk. We have been having plenty trouble with tramps, an' the word is pick 'em up."

"Aw, say, I ain't done nothin'," remonstrated Smiling, the color fading from his peaked face, but not the grin.

"You're not goin' to have a chance to do anythin', either," declared the officer. "See? Bums are out on this division. We had a couple brakemen killed by jungle buzzards, and we're playin' 'em off our chest from now on. The calaboose for yours—and laugh that off!"

"All right," said Mr. Smith. And did.

II

It was down west of the depot that Holden spotted the officer and his gangling, wretched victim. He approached the pair, his keen eyes fixing themselves on the prisoner with a scrutiny that read deep into the soul of the hapless Smiling Smith. The officer was propelling his captive along with characteristic roughness, the fingers of

his left hand tightly twisted into the victim's collar.

A man who is being manhandled by a cop is not, by all of the laws of things, supposed to have anything to grin about. But here was a simple soul being shoved around the end of a string of freight cars by the stout arm of the law, while on his grimed, unshaven face was the smile that won't rub off.

"Well, what have you been up to?" boomed Holden in that big outdoor voice of his.

"I was just tryin' to make a hitch out of town," explained Smiling, "and the shack threw me off. Just then this guy grabbed me."

"What do you do for a living? Or don't you do anything?"

"I railroad some."

"Railroad? Railroad what?"

"Oh, just anythin'. Stinger, scissor-bill, mud hop, tallerpot, op."

"Yeah. You must be good. What are you paid up in?"

"I ain't paid up in nothin'—not even a pie book." There was a little plaintive note in the man's tone, and Holden caught it. He knew men, did the burly, big-hearted superintendent.

"Why don't you get a job?"

"The home guard have got 'em all. A boomer don't stand no show, unless he makes a rush some place."

"And you can thump a trick, can you?"

"I'm pretty good."

"Can you hold down an OS job?"

"Sure."

"All right; you've got a sine right now. Go up to the dispatcher's office and ask for Conrad. Tell him Holden sent you to sit in on that graveyard trick at Squaw Hill."

The grin on the face of the gaunt wanderer widened, and he sighed.

"Gosh! Say, thanks a lot, Mr. Holden. Gee, I won't forget this."

"You'll thank me if you make good out there at Squaw Hill," Holden grunted. And added: "What's your name, or haven't you got any?"

"Smith."

"Smith what? Smith isn't a name; it's a chronic disease."

"Smiling Smith."

"We're getting there. What's the other one?"

"Lavinda."

"All right, Smiling, go up and see Conrad. Get your pass, and let's see what makes you tick."

"I'll just mosey along with you, bo," put in the officer. "You wouldn't be the first one that's pulled a fast one around here. If you click with the dispatcher, well and good; if you don't you'll get a sock in the jaw and thirty days to boot."

Together the incongruous pair moved toward the station.

Smiling Smith finally passed muster by the bare skin of his teeth. They planked him over in a corner before a wire that was noisily clicking off car reports, and his railroad experience at the key stood him in good stead. As an ordinary everyday commercial brass clouter, Smiling Smith would have probably mired down to his ears.

Be it understood that Mr. Smith was far from being an operator of any particular ability. He was, even after some years of holding down various sines, not so far removed from that embryo of the key known as the lid and the ham. As in everything else, he was more or less of a dub.

Smiling Smith had, back down the years, graduated from a school known as the A. D. T. He had been a Western Union "trotter" in the days of Steve Fitzgibbons, there in a little back

room on Doane Street, Boston. In the course of time, and after much diligent practicing at key and sounder, he had moved on up from a messenger at the old "Main" at 109 State Street to an operator in a cubby-hole at Young's Hotel. The hours were from six to twelve, and the stipend, six dollars per week.

Smiling Smith's "Morse" was something to put horns on any operator, and there came a day when it was suggested to the Smith progeny that he should have been a horse doctor. Subsequently the youth braved the tracks of the Terminal Division of the Boston and Maine and ended up at the Fitchburg Division roundhouse. He tried firing, and decided that he would be a railroad man.

And a railroad man he was!

He became a boomer. A grinning, lop-gaited figure with a straw-colored thatch and enormous feet to match a pair of dangling, hamlike paws. That was Smiling Smith. A little bit of everything, and not much of anything.

Armed with a pass, Smiling Smith angled his ungainly person aboard No. 12 and took his departure for Squaw Hill. And, let it be known, Squaw Hill wasn't much.

Trains eastbound on the Mountain Division pause at Helper, ten miles west of Squaw Hill, to allow helper locomotives to back on. Then, doubleheading—and perhaps with a pusher on behind or back in the train—the drag highballs out. There is a slight sag at Squaw Hill, and it is here that the thundering trains snatch a hasty breath or two and take a mad run at the Rocky Mountains, because it is the last loving boost they get from Old Man Gravity for fifty-two heartbreaking mountain miles.

Westbound trains come booming down from the silver-crested Continental Divide with wheels smoking and flanges screaming, while just east of Squaw Hill the shackles of train line and red-hot brake shoes are cast off. No longer is there need for the man at the throttle to repeatedly pinch them to the rail on the curves, or ease the reeling cars around the switchbacks; for the steel now opens away in straight flight, with just enough easy tangents to put a little spice into sixty-five miles an hour.

Coming off the curve at mile post thirty-two, the hot shots shake the kinks out of themselves, drag out the slack, uncork a lordly plume and go storming across the Red Cañon trestle, past the squat and inconsequential Squaw Hill telegraph office and away to the end of the division at Castle Rock.

A face appears, perhaps, at door or window in the grimy little station, a hand flips its salute—and once more Squaw Hill settles back with drowsy indifference amid a cloud of dust and pelting cinders.

III

Smiling Smith dropped into the routine of things at Squaw Hill without creating any great upheaval up and down the division, or without causing particular disruption. Operators who became acquainted with his "fist," and trainmen who came to know his face were unanimous in their declaration that he would never suffer for want of identity.

"Morse" men used to say that when he laid that mitt of his on the key the wires sagged for miles. His big bat ears and his colossal feet interested the crews of trains that had cause to hold over at Squaw Hill for a little. Later on these gentry would

take great delight in describing the third trick man at Squaw Hill to their less fortunate brethren.

"And did you ever see this bird, Smiling Smith, who thumps a trick at Squaw Hill? Harh? No? Well, buddy, you missed something. He's jointed like a six-foot rule. He keeps thin from dragging around them feet of his. And the paws on him! Say, if he hit a guy with one of 'em he'd brain 'im, no foolin'. Yes, sir, that brass pounder was got up by somebody that figgered to use him for somethin' special."

Though railroad men were never at a loss for suggestions concerning certain uses to which he might put portions of his anatomy, there was, as a rule, little malice back of their coarse jests. The nearest that any came to it was the crew on one side of numbers 218 and 203, the fast freights. These men seemingly resented the fact that the operator on the graveyard trick couldn't be forced out of his grinning shell, and they baited him unmercifully.

Previous to the coming of Smiling Smith, there had been waged on the Great Southern's mountain iron, a grim and vicious warfare between trainmen and tramps. It had grown from nothing to a threatening flame of no little consequence.

Especially the night that a brakeman, stung to unusual brutality by the memory of a beating at the hands of a hobo gang, ditched a tramp just as an extra swung onto the Red Cañon trestle, to send him hurtling to his death on the jagged rocks far below — that night ripped open the never-healing sore.

Trampdom's vicious element swore vengeance. A brakeman was shot and pitched from a train. Another suffered at the hands of several "gay-cats." An engineer was struck by a rock flung from the top of a cut. The railroad police took a hand in the affair, and in consequence the innocent suffered as well as the guilty.

There were no fine distinctions. Fists and clubs flew indiscriminately on the slightest provocation. This attitude on the part of the railroad men was fanned by the almost feverish apprehension that one night the tramps would wreck a train, somewhere out on those high-flung, crooked mountain grades.

There had been no particular disturbance for several weeks. Everything had been moving smoothly—too smoothly. It was like the quiet before the storm. The vigilance of trainmen, nevertheless, did not relax. There was a vague, disturbing something in the air. No one could put their finger on it, but it was there, hanging over the haughty mountain iron like a black and menacing cloud.

Smiling Smith found Squaw Hill quite to his liking. He never tired of watching those hot shots roaring through the sag, with a white feather and a red stack, as they fairly flung themselves at the grades of the west slope. He liked to see the limited trains come careening off that long, sweeping curve east of the trestle and sweep away into the land of the setting sun.

He found a certain pleasure in staring up at the mighty peaks above him, and their silver crowns. He liked the graveyard trick because it gave him plenty of opportunity to sit and fashion castles in the air. Smiling Smith had always been a dreamer. There was infinite satisfaction in picturing himself as a handsome hero, of seeing in the misty vales where he gazed a man of wealth and success. In his

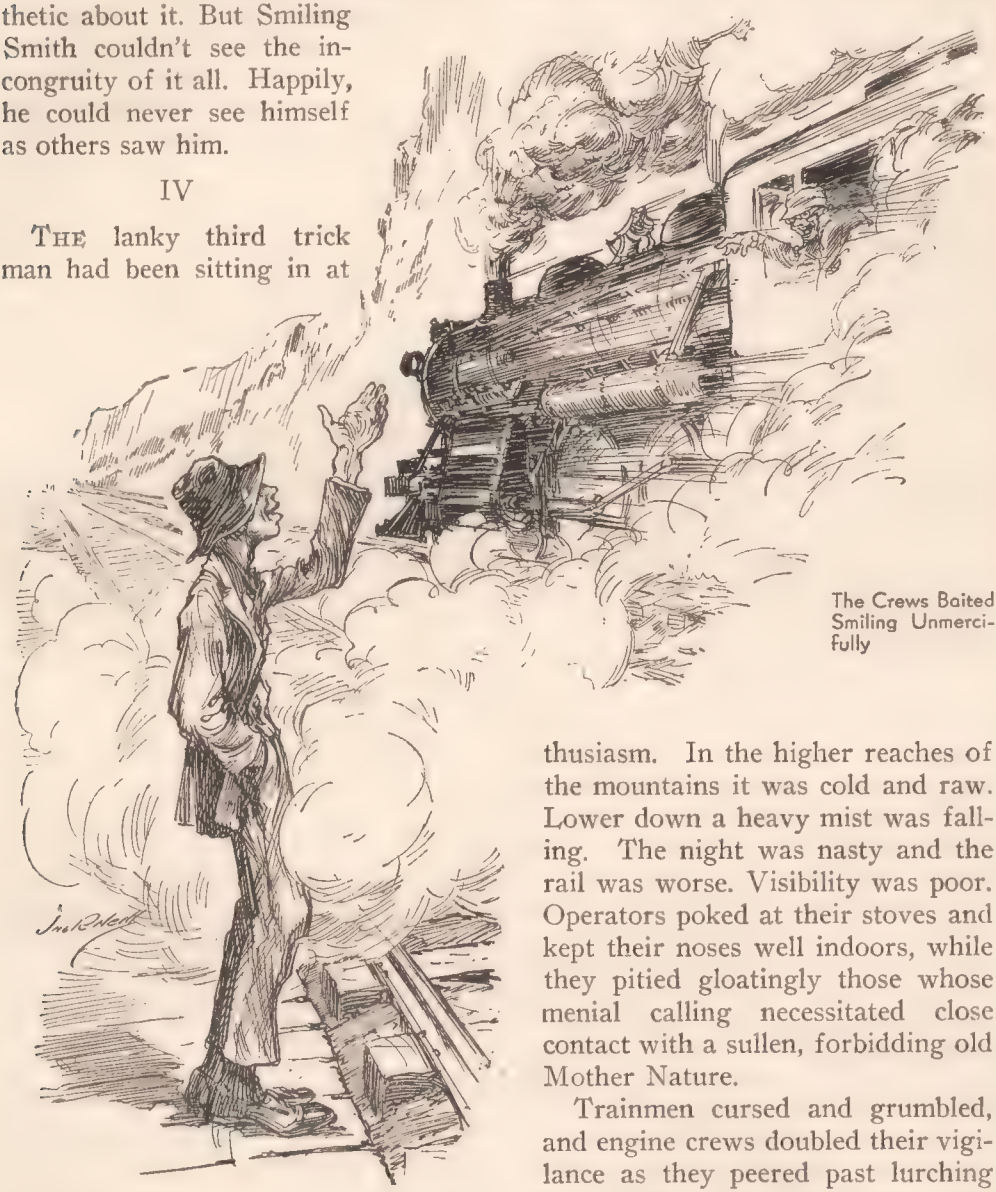
dreamland he always returned to parade before those who had so often mocked him.

There was something almost pathetic about it. But Smiling Smith couldn't see the incongruity of it all. Happily, he could never see himself as others saw him.

IV

The lanky third trick man had been sitting in at Squaw Hill a little over two months when the expected happened. In a flash the storm broke, and the foolishly grinning operator was caught in its bloody vortex.

The time to-night was close to one o'clock. The sounder in the resonator in front of Smiling Smith chattered spasmodically and with dubious enthusiasm. In the higher reaches of the mountains it was cold and raw. Lower down a heavy mist was falling. The night was nasty and the rail was worse. Visibility was poor. Operators poked at their stoves and kept their noses well indoors, while they pitied gloatingly those whose menial calling necessitated close contact with a sullen, forbidding old Mother Nature.



The Crews Baited Smiling Unmercifully

Trainmen cursed and grumbled, and engine crews doubled their vigilance as they peered past lurching boiler fronts into the silver blur through which they plunged.

As time dragged through the dismal night watch, Smiling Smith found himself possessed of a vague sense of distinct uneasiness. He finally went to

the door and peered out. Misty sentinels paced through the dull yellow glow that shone from the windows of the telegraph office. Shadows, deeper in the background of the night, took on vague and awful shapes. Every pool of blackness seemed to shelter potential fiends, waiting their opportunity to strike from behind.

A kind of terror caught at the man in the door. He shuddered, as his imagination ran riot. He could feel terrible, leering eyes fixed on him. He tried to laugh it off, but the only result was chattering teeth. He drew back and hurriedly closed the door, turning the key in the lock.

The train wire sounder rattled off an OS. No. 203, fast freight—No. 218's return job—was by Antlers. This was "Bellering" Pratt's train. "Whistling" Rooney was the engineer, with "Cold-water" Clark on the left side of the cab. "Washout" Williams was the flag, and "Leadfoot" Hubbard, head shack.

Mentally, Smiling Smith tabulated them. What a crew! Tough, rock-hard, and always primed for battle. A hard-boiled hot shot and a hard-boiled crew. Always a chip on their shoulders.

Williams, the flag, had been the man who had ditched the bo at the Red Cañon trestle. And it was Bellering Pratt who had administered several beatings to luckless tramps he had caught riding on his train. Of the many threats made by the hobo clan, Pratt himself had come in for a large share. In consequence it was quite natural that the vengeance of certain tramp gangs should be directed in particular at the fast freights.

All too well Smiling Smith knew who had No. 203 to-night. Of all the gangs on the road, this crew had ridden him the hardest. Eastbound, 218 went into the hole at Squaw Hill for the Princess Express. And when this much-advertised queen of the rails was carrying signals, 218's crew had just enough time on their hands to bedevil the long-suffering Mr. Smith plenty, and they managed to hang the works on him a little more severely than there was any call for.

They bullied and roughed him at every opportunity, until even a jack rabbit would have at last gone up for murder. But Smiling took it all, as usual—grinning. Bellering Pratt and Whistling Rooney were a pair of hard-shelled terriers from away back, and they could not conceive of a man quietly swallowing gibes and insults, time on end—unless he was yellow. This, they finally concluded, the third trick man was. And they came to accord him the contempt they felt he deserved.

Strangely enough, there came a day when Mountain Division men spoke the name of Smiling Smith almost reverently, for he had builded in their hearts a memory that only death could erase.

V

Smiling Smith went to a side window and stood for a little, squinting toward the single main street of Squaw Hill and the gloomy buildings that lined it. There wasn't a light in sight. He then turned and allowed his eye to wander up and down the track.

Switch lamps glimmered here and there; several cars cast up their shadowy bulk beyond the squat freight shed. Far away to the west twin pinpoints of green glimmered high on the staff of an automatic signal mast. Likewise, two friendly dots of green winked through the mist from out across the Red Cañon trestle.

The troublesome thing that was in the air persisted, and Smiling Smith discovered that fear was beginning to claw at his heart. He raised one of the windows of the bay, and listened. There was the low moan of the wind, the steady drip of water from the eaves and the faint hum of the wires.

Mike Reddy's dog was barking. Smiling wondered what the yellow mutt could have on its mind. And the longer he listened to it, the more convinced he was that the sound carried a challenging note. Another sound crept in now, and the operator suddenly found himself undergoing alternate hot and cold flashes that started tiny beads of sweat from his forehead.

Somewhere out in the darkness that blanketed the trestle was an entirely foreign note, a thing that did not belong there at this time of night. It was made by metal occasionally working against metal. A low, sinister sound that came at irregular intervals. Suddenly a bit of light flickered. The next instant it was gone.

That one brief glimpse had been enough. During the moment that it lived, the sick dot of flame had revealed vague, shadowy figures—sinister, menacing forms, it seemed to the pale and trembling operator.

Perhaps it was going to be a hold-up! Or it might be train wreckers!

Smiling Smith turned and reached for the key—and hesitated. If he voiced a suspicion of danger to the dispatcher, that worthy would soon tell him to go out and see what it was, or, if he was afraid, to get Mike Reddy. If it turned out to be merely a freak of an imaginative vision, everybody up and down the division would catch up the bit of choice gossip off the wire, and he would never hear the last of it. No; he had better go himself, and report his findings, if of importance, later.

After all, he tried to assure himself, it was probably nothing at all. Just a freakish twist that went with other shadows that his imagination filled with menace. He'd take his flash light and walk up there. He felt his heart pounding at his ribs, and he sought to drown the noise of it by rattling the grate of the stove with unnecessary vigor. He put in a couple of lumps of coal, slipped into his coat and moved toward the door.

It required not a little will power for Smiling Smith to step out into the mist-soaked darkness. He was afraid, mortally so. He couldn't have said why, but he was. Nevertheless, he went—shutting the warmth and light and security of the telegraph office out behind him as he falteringly closed the door.

Across the Red Cañon trestle several burly, menacing figures paused in their nefarious task of drawing spikes to turn sullen, smoldering eyes toward the shadowy smudge that was the little Squaw Hill station.

For a brief interval there was silence; then a gruff voice growled:

"It's that guy in the telegraph office. He's been standin' rubberin' out the winder fer five minutes."

A moment of watchfulness; then another voice, throaty and harsh, spoke excitedly: "Hey, lookit! There's the stiff's flash light! He's comin' this way!"

"Hell!" rasped another of the figures at the end of the trestle. "I told ya fools to go easy wit' the damn glim!"

"Got all the spikes out on the outside of the rail?" the voice of the first speaker demanded in an undertone.

"Yuh."

"Git the bolts out of the fishplates," the other went on quickly. "This end here. When that hog comes off the curve an' hits the rail, she'll let go. They'll pick the mess out of the cañon with shovels. Git busy, you two birds. Me an' Slugger'll go acrost the trestle an' cock a lamp at this guy."

The two hulking tramps started to move away, but paused, while the man who was apparently directing the grim affair spoke a last word of warning.

"Don't you stiffs break those wires connectin' the rails. They make a contact with the automatics."

The two men crouching above the fishplate grunted an acknowledgment of the other's admonition, and began loosening the four nuts that tied the rails together.

A pile of new railroad ties stood beside the right of way ditch approximately midway between the Squaw Hill station and the westerly end of the Red Cañon trestle. As he approached their somber bulk, Smiling Smith eyed the shadows that lurked there askance. Every instant the premonition of impending danger that had laid hold of him grew stronger.

Smiling Smith had never overcome his boyish fear of the dark. He always had a feeling that evil eyes were upon him, or that lurking figures stalked his footsteps. Once Smiling paused to listen, but he heard nothing beyond the murmur of the wind and Mike Reddy's mutt of a dog.

Suddenly there was a step, cinders crunched beneath a heavy foot—and a menacing form loomed in front of him. It had come from the shadow behind the pile of railroad ties. He gasped. Coherent speech failed. A snarling voice leaped at him.

"Hey! Where the hell do yuh t'ink yo're goin', feller?"

"I—I—" Smiling licked desperately at his lips with a hot tongue, while a sickly, foolish grin spread itself over his face. "I thought I heard something," he managed to blurt out at last.

A match flickered and for an instant flamed close to the face of the operator. Came a coarse, jeering laugh.

"Scared stiff!" was the derisive comment.

Another quick step, and a second blurred bulk was beside him.

"Ya make a move an' I'll split yuh skull!" snarled the newcomer.

"But I don't understand," half whined Smiling Smith. "What's the matter? What's happened?"

"Hah!" exclaimed the taller of the pair. "It ain't what's happened! It's what's *goin'* to happen!"

That the pair had been drinking was plainly evinced by the stench of highly potent moonshine on their breath. That they were a desperate type of the hobo tribe, the operator had no doubt. He realized almost with their first words that his own plight was one of acute danger, and yet this was instantly dimmed by the boastful and gloating declaration that followed.

"Throw 'im off the trestle!" snarled the man who had previously been addressed as Slugger.

The other tramp momentarily ignored his companion's murderous suggestion. His twisted mind was concerned, at the moment, only with the fiendish plot that burned in his inflamed brain.

"We got a rail loose back there!" he bragged with devilish exultance, while he prefaced the next sentence with a string of vile epithets. "Them damn stiffs on that fast freight are all goin' to hell in de Red Cañon. I know 'em—Pratt an' Williams an' Hubbard.

Tough guys, harh? Throw the boes off the deck! Kick 'em into the gorge! Yah-h! Say, when all them red ball's wheels quit turnin' them punks is goin' to have the whole stinkin' rattler wrapped round their necks!"

"You've got a rail up?" gasped the operator, the habitual grin for once fading from his face.

"J'st loose, guy!" cried the big tramp. "J'st loose—spikes pulled on the outside and the fishplates off one end. When they come battin' off the curve, they hit it before they git on the bridge. We didn't bother nothin' to throw the signals—they'll all be green for that job!"

"The stinkin' fools will highball t' hell!" flung out the Slugger. "An' we'll be on our way. The bulls ain't goin' to find us, either. We'll be sittin' pretty, scoffin' our heads off when they're beatin' out their brains huntin' them boes."

VI

Somewhere off to the east a new note crept in. It was a shrill, long-drawn whistle blast. And it came echoing and reëchoing out across the mighty slopes of the Rockies. Whistling Rooney, ripping the night wide open to tell the cockeyed world that No. 203 was coming down the railroad right on the minute.

The manifest was by White Water, past the last telegraph office east, and swinging down toward Squaw Hill as fast as the grades and curves would allow. There had been a mad thought creeping into the mind of the slow-thinking Smiling Smith, that had to do with turning and racing frantically back to the station, trusting that he could get there enough ahead of these two murdering devils to bang the door and lock it. This might have given him time to flash out a warning, to have them hold 203 at White Water. But that chance was gone, and whatever was to be done to save the freight was now in the hands of himself and his Maker.

A gang of stark mad and vengeful hoboes had a rail loose, and they were between him and the approaching train; there was no way of getting around them, even should he manage to escape the bulky pair that now blocked his path. Just what his own fate might be at their hands, he had neither time nor inclination to consider.

He was, first of all, a railroad man. With a suddenness that was stunning, a terrible responsibility had descended on his shoulders. He had come to a place in his life where he had got to make a quick decision. He could play the game, give the best that was in him, and go out fighting, if he must—or—or he could fly the yellow flag, and quit like a miserable whipped mongrel cur. He had his choice.

Something snapped in Smiling Smith. Deep inside of him there was an explosion. He saw red. The two tramps were closing in on him now. There was no mistaking the fact that they meant to make a short but exceedingly thorough work of Squaw Hill's third trick man.

"Split the spindlin' rat!" snarled the bulkier of the pair, swinging with a short club that he carried. "Lay 'im open!"

The other edged around behind the ungainly form of the operator, half crouching, his fists clenched, as he waited for an opening.

Since the beginning of time, nature has found peculiar ways and means of providing its weaker children with weapons sufficient unto their needs.

The hedgehog, with barbed quills; the skunk, with an ingenious arrangement all its own; the fox, with cunning, and the antelope, with swiftness.

Smiling Smith had himself in nowise been neglected when the division of things had been made. He had two number twelve brogans, and a pair of ham-like paws that usually dangled down around his knees with all the grace and superb charm of a couple of idle steam shovels.

It might be narrated that smiling Mr. Smith went atavistic with a vengeance. In the length of time it would, approximately, take a jack rabbit to jump a furrow, this simple soul had reverted to a type usually associated with the caveman age. There were no preliminaries. None! Smiling swung with his right foot and countered with his left. A Terpsichorean one-two punch. He had learned it from a Canuck named Pierre, and it was good.

Something hit the big tramp in the pit of the stomach with the force of a sledgehammer, and while he clutched his middle in his two hands, another something clouted him in the rear and jacked his spine exactly four inches above his unwashed neck. The wind went out of him as completely as it leaves a punctured toy balloon.

As auspicious as was the beginning of Smiling Smith's conquest, his first flush of victory was short lived. The man known as Slugger came leaping in from behind with a pile-driving right that caught the operator fairly on the side of the head. Lights danced before his eyes and he staggered to his knees.

In going down, however, he instinctively grabbed for the legs of his antagonist. A second smashing blow found its mark against his mouth, and he spat out two bloody teeth. The next moment the operator and the tramp rolled into the ditch, panting, clawing, striking. Now Smiling was on top, and now the Slugger.

Two terrible hands closed about the lanky " Morse " man's thin neck, sinking savagely into the flesh. He found his wind suddenly shut off. Desperately he sought to raise his heavier antagonist, while he dropped his head back against a tie end in a jarring im-

"Split the Spindlin' Rat," Snarled

pact. The fingers at his throat loosened, and Smiling Smith struggled to his feet.

The larger of his antagonists was climbing groaningly to his knees, and Smiling sent his clod-like hoof at the man's face. The sound it made in striking was not nice, but this was not a nice fight. For, be it understood, Smiling Smith was not alone fighting for his own life, but for the lives of the crew on No. 203.

The Slugger came up mouthing terrible curses. He swung both fists as he leaped at his blundering and awkward

opponent. Grimed knuckles ripped the flesh above the operator's eye, but he did not give ground. A pendulum-like right came sizzling up from the vicinity of his shoe tops and plastered the Slugger's nose around under his left eye.

The burly leader of the train wreck-

the Bulkier of the Two, Swinging a Short Club That He Carried. "Lay 'im Open"

ers, recovering from the punishing but not necessarily serious kick he had receipted for, heaved himself erect with murder in his soul.

"Hold the damned cur!" mumbled the hobo, his mouth full of blood and broken teeth. "Hold 'im! I'll git a club an' spatter his brains on the ground!"

A right swing from the Slugger tipped Smiling off his feet, and he went down in the ditch beside the track. Like the sorely harassed small boy, who, upon finding himself outnumbered, scrambles frantically for the nearest handy missiles, the floundering Mr. Smith raked the ground with his broken and bruised hands in a desperate search for something that would bring the pair of tramps down to his size. His fingers suddenly encountered a heavy piece of metal. It was a fishplate.

A queer cackling laugh that was like nothing human rattled from between Smiling Smith's mashed and bleeding lips. He jackknifed his ungainly form upward. Once he was flailed to the ground by the bull-like rush of the Slugger, but he retained his grip on the fishplate.

VII

Out in the mountains, No. 203 was whipping west on a double green. Voices in the cab called out the signals as they came winking into view around the bends. Now Rooney, first to see

the shimmering dots on his side, and now the fireman or brakeman.

"Green eye!"

"Green on the block!"

In just a little while the big jack would swing onto the curve east of the trestle at Squaw Hill. There would be a shrill, exultant whistle blast; then a mottled plume of smoke would go boiling upward from the squat stack, the exhaust would break forth in a crashing roar—and 203 would be on its way to eternity.

Two automatic blocks intervened now between the manifest train and Red Cañon's rocky, deep-slashed depths. Two tall, silent guardians, rearing up their ghost-like masts beside the Mountain Division's right of way. The fast freight swept closer, wheels hot and flanges smoking. Through the trees, far around the curve, the head brakeman picked up the emerald dots, and his raucous voice bawled across the cab:

"Green eye-e!"

"Green I get it!"

One more block, and it would be everlastingly too late.

And Smiling Smith sitting in!

Attracted by the sounds of battle, the two tramps that had been left to complete their devilish task ran at last to the aid of their companions. One clutched a spanner in his hand.

The hobo leader, having retrieved his bludgeon, charged forward, while the Slugger sought to get behind this bird who was proving a very tough nut to crack. Smiling Smith sidestepped the tramp with the club, and swung the fishplate with every ounce of his strength. The heavy piece of steel found its mark and settled that particular gentleman's hash for all time.

The cracking of his companion's skull gave the Slugger food for thought, and he pulled up, lest his own pate be laid open. The operator, his beastly grin happily hidden by the blackness, hurled the fishplate at the second hobo. It struck him on the chest, and he staggered back.

In a flash Smiling Smith jerked about on his heels and started in a blundering run for a main line switch a short distance down the track. Already other feet were pounding over the ties from the direction of the trestle. Every instant was as precious as a jewel of fabulous price.

Ever since his mind had fully grasped the terrible situation that had developed, one thought had burned within him. It offered the only solution. There was no other means of washing out 203. Stunned and dizzy, nauseatingly sick from a blow in his stomach, the one spark that provided salvation for the manifest and its roughneck crew never dimmed in the heart of him.

As he ran, Smiling Smith tugged a switch key from his pocket. He gripped it tight in the fingers of his broken right hand, and fixed his blood-dimmed vision on the shimmering eye that glowed at him from the top of the switch stand beyond. Behind he could hear the pounding feet of his pursuers. There were three, now, and they were gaining. The man known as the Slugger was gasping out the fact that they had run afoul of a fighting hellion.

It was close, was this race. Life and death hung in the balance. Hair-fine, it was drawn, and the skip of a heart beat could tilt the scales either way. One false step, one miscue, and death would take over the transfer of the graveyard trick at Squaw Hill tonight.

Smiling Smith sagged to his knees beside the switch at last. The key in his hand was thrust at the lock. The bow flipped back, and the lock dangled from its short length of chain. To the eastward, No. 203 was rolling closer. Already her headlight was washing the slopes with silver.

One signal mast stood between the oncoming freight and the Big Meet Yonder.

Twin dots of green were down around the curve, a clear block to gladden the heart of a mad main line mauler.

"Green she is!" called the shack from his perch on the front edge of the fireman's seat box. "Gre—" The rest was lost in a gasp of surprise. The brakeman blinked; then jerked his head out of the window to better vision the strange thing that was happening.

And then, quick as light, his shrill-pitched voice went across the cab. *"Red! Red eye!* Hold everything, Rooney, she's red as hell!"

"Red on the block!" came the growling response, echoing back. The hand of the engineer dropped swiftly to the handle of the ET equipment. There was a service reduction, and the brake shoes clamped against the polished wheel surfaces back along the surging cars.

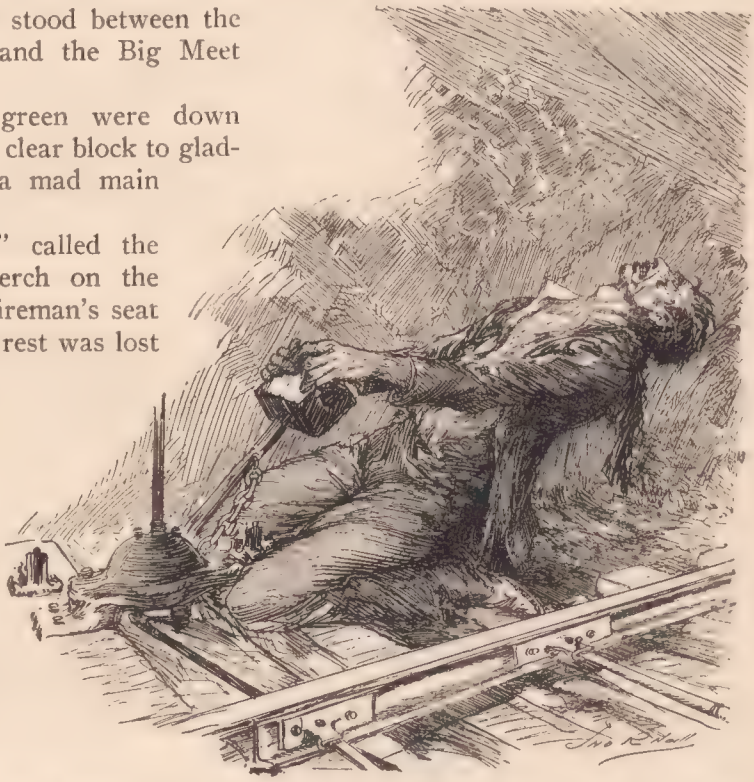
Peremptory and undeniable was the sullen eye of red that winked out, high at the peak of the slender column of steel, and the manifest train bowed protestingly to its command.

VIII

In a house back somewhat from the Squaw Hill station, Mrs. Mike Reddy came bolt upright in bed. For a little she listened; then hurried to a window. A moment later she was back, prodding at her snoring head man.

"Mike! Mike, in the name of all that's holy, get up! There's a terrible fight over by the depot. I can hear them cursing, and the blows! It's awful!"

Directly Mike Reddy, track foreman, rambled forth in a derby hat, boots and nightshirt. In one hand he carried a lantern, while in the other he clutched a shotgun.



Smiling Sagged to His Knees Beside the Switch at Last. The Ball Came Back

En route, he yapped at the dog, and let out a bellow for his gang.

Over on the track, Smiling Smith was fighting for his life. He had crowded down the switch lever and locked it. The opening of the switch had automatically thrown the home signal red, out there east of the Red Cañon trestle, as the arms jerked into a horizontal position.

Before the operator could stagger erect, his assailants were on him. He was very close to being out on his feet, but the fact that he had succeeded in flinging a red board in front of No. 203 was like a magic elixir in his veins. He swung his big fists, and knew the satisfaction of a wild haymaker going home. Again he aimed a brogan at a charging hulk's middle, and was rewarded by a howl of agony.

Blows that smashed against his own face and body, Smiling Smith did not feel. But at last the spanner landed against his head, and he went out in a blaze of glory.

When Squaw Hill's third trick operator opened his eyes, there were lanterns in his face, and voices murmured somewhere in the misty vale that had enveloped him. He tried several times to speak. At last broken words came. "They—they got the spikes out—east of the trestle—"

A strong pair of arms closed about him, and the voice of Whistling Rooney, choked now with a big lump that throbbed in his throat, murmured close to his ear.

"Lord love you, Smilin'! Boy, you played the game to-night!"

"The rail—"

"Don't fret, Mike Reddy found it."

"Did — did 203 get the — the red block—all right?"

"I'll say she did!" cried Bellering Pratt. "Why—" He broke off to utter a couple of oaths, while he tried to blink the tears out of his eyes. He would have you to understand that he was no damned blubbering slob.

Rooney's fingers closed tight over the great battered paw of the lanky operator, and he shook his head slowly, pityingly, as he gazed at the terribly slashed and beaten face he hugged close to him.

"Great Heaven, what a murderous trimmin' he took!" The burly engineer paused, a catch in his voice. "And they never wiped that smile off!"

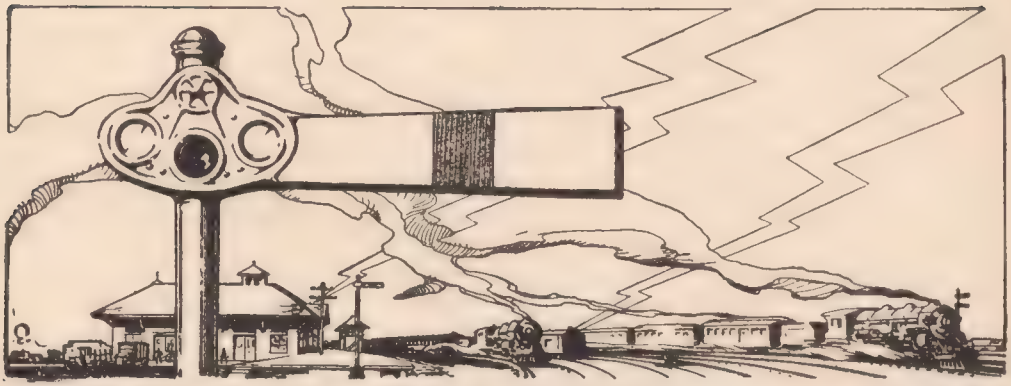
At last the injured man identified the speaker, while somewhere in the background of things was the voice of his Nemesis, Bellering Pratt. A horrible, bloody grin spread itself over his well-nigh unrecognizable features.

"Go to hell—you big stiffs!" breathed Smiling Smith, infinitely satisfied with himself. "As—as quick as I get me breath—I'll knock the blocks off the two of yuh!"

MET TRAINS FOR FORTY YEARS

FOR forty years now "Thad" Jackson has met every passenger train day and night at Paris, Tennessee, on the L. & N., except for sickness and vacations. In his bus he has hauled thousands of passengers without an injury. He started with four-horse busses, and wore out several. The streets were improved, and he wore out several two-horse busses, and then two motor busses. He now has a taxicab. It is said that he knows more traveling men by their names than any other man in Tennessee.

My Greatest Thrill



A department where true experiences of railroad men are related. Prompt payment at good rates is offered for narratives of personal thrills. Each story must be verified.

Kennedy's Last Holdup

The Notorious Bandit Was Pulling a Perfect Railroad Robbery, but He Had Misjudged an Unknown Actor

By Bill Finley

I AM just a fireman, but a tallowpot has some real thrills the same as any other rail. I have had quite a few, but on the night of November 2, 1922, I had my greatest one.

I was firing for old R. S. Edwards, on the River division of the Frisco, from Chaffee, Missouri, to St. Louis. I had worked up from Chaffee on the night of November 1. We had pulled in a long drag, and I didn't waste any time in hitting the hay on my arrival in St. Louis. I slept nearly all day, and called up the roundhouse and asked the caller when I was getting out.

" Bill, you are getting out on 805 tonight," he said, naming our fast limited.

" How come?" I asked him.

" The regular is nursing a spell of the cramps," he informed me.

Believe me, if I had known then what was in store for me on that trip, I would have thrown me a spell of the cramps too.

I went to the station early, and had the engine ready to go thirty minutes before leaving time. The hogger was George Kay, who had been quite a boomer before settling down.

At 11.25 the conductor gave a highball. George shoved the reverse lever down in the corner, pulled the throttle out a few notches, and we went creep-

ing out through a network of switches. Once out of the terminal, George pulled the throttle clear back, hooked the Johnson bar back a few notches, and my wild ride began.

We have all oil burners now, but then we had to keep them hot with a scoop shovel and black diamonds. We hadn't gone very far when I decided it would be much nicer with R. S. on the old twelve hundred with a drag.

Our track is one sharp curve after another, winding around between the Mississippi River and high rock bluffs, and when I wasn't trying to hit that small fire door with a scoop of coal, I was raking it back from under my feet where I had failed to hit the door.

I thought to myself that if some of that speed-mad public which was stretched out on the cushions back in the Pullmans talking about the slow train to Arkansas, was riding up there in that wild rolling cab making sixty per, they would be singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

We had been doing very well and staying about on time with the steam gauge showing two hundred pounds some of the time, but one hundred and fifty more often, when we made a water stop at Seventy-six, ninety-five miles out of St. Louis.

Though Seventy-six wasn't a passenger stop, we got one anyway that we didn't know anything about at the time.

We were a short distance out of Seventy-six when I started to put in a fire. I saw a dark form up on top of the coal gate, and this dark form had on a mask and was pointing a sawed-off shotgun at me. He motioned for me to raise my hands. I thought it good judgment to do as directed.

The hogger looked around and saw me with my hands up.

"What the hell now," he yelled. "I have been expecting anything, but for you to throw up your hands is the limit."

I nodded my head toward the coal gate. George looked around and saw why I had my hands up. He received the same signal, and there were two of us with hands up. The masked figure descended to the deck of the engine, keeping us covered with the shotgun. He moves me around so that he can keep an eye on me and talk to George at the same time.

"I don't want anything from you birds," he says, "but I want what you are hauling. When you come to milepost 100 you will see a flash light. I want you to stop her there."

We pulled out for milepost 100, because the robber was ready to go.

Believe me if you don't think it is an exciting time for a tallowpot to try and fire a rocking engine making sixty, you are mistaken. The robber stood over me with that sawed-off shotgun, and I knew that if I made a crooked move, his trigger finger would get nervous. That was the longest five miles I ever saw, but all runs have to come to an end some time.

As we neared the place mentioned by the robber, a form came out from behind a rock holding a flash light. George shut off and applied the air and stopped at exactly the right spot. The man in the cab made us climb down to the ground, where he was joined by robber number two, who was also masked. We had only been stopped a short time when the conductor came over to see what the trouble was, and he was lined up with George and me. When the mail clerk opened the door to his car he was also covered and made to hit the ground.

The man that had held the flash

light climbed into the mail car, holding some dynamite in his arms, while robber number one kept us all covered with his shotgun, and here is where a little comedy was mixed in with the excitement.

Just as robber number one got into the mail car, the porter came stumbling into the scene.

"What's taking place here?" he said.

The fellow in the car showed the porter what he had in his hands.

"Here, black boy, catch this dynamite as I throw it to you," he said.

The porter let out a whoopee and tried to go right through the middle of a rock bigger than the engine, and before he could get going in some other direction the robber jumps down and stops him with a pistol and lines him up with the rest of us.

One of the birds took the mail clerk, George and me under control, while the other one ordered the con and the porter to uncouple the mail car from the train. Then they lined us all up with our faces to the bluff while they climbed into the cab of the engine. The fellow that took the ride with us got upon the engineer's seat and started

He Was Pointing a Sawed-Off Shotgun at Me and Motioning Me to Raise My Hands

the engine just as skillfully as George could have done. There we stood, while our engine and mail car rolled down the track.

They went about a mile when they stopped and took several mail bags from the car that were supposed to have a large sum of money in them. They next cut loose from the mail car and went on with the light engine. It was three miles from there to Wittenburg, where they stopped, threw off the mail bags, opened the throttle and jumped off. The engine ran about ten or eleven miles and stopped, all out of steam.

But alas for Mr. Robbers! Their

time was very short. They had a partner in with them whom the public has never known, that turned traitor and tipped the officials off to all the plans of the holdup. He was to be waiting for them with an automobile at the road crossing where they got off the engine. They picked up the mail bags and walked only a few steps when they were met by a solid stream of lead. There were ten or eleven special agents waiting for them behind an embankment where the automobile was supposed to be and the robbers made clear targets in the bright moonlight. I doubt if they ever knew what was taking place before it was all over.

I looked at their bodies riddled with bullets lying on the floor of the freight room at the station where they were taken, and I am convinced that firing an engine might be a little dangerous, but I prefer it very much to the holdup game.

The one that held the flash light at milepost 100 was only a youth by the name of Logan. His home was in Memphis, Tennessee, and no doubt that was his first attempt at the train robbing game. He probably was taking lessons from a master.

The fellow that got on the engine with us at Seventy-six was none other than the famous Jack Kennedy, noted train robber, and one time fireman and engineer for a southern railroad. He was known mostly as "Quail Hunter" Kennedy, for he was arrested once near the scene of a train robbery with a sawed-off shotgun, and his alibi was that he was hunting quail. Hence the name Quail Hunter Kennedy.

And me, I am still firing along the same piece of track, and I hardly ever pass along between Seventy-six and milepost 100 that I don't think how much easier it is to keep two hundred pounds of steam with the *click click* of the old duplex stoker than it was that moonlight night in '22 with a number three scoop in my hands and a sawed-off shotgun over my head.

Scissor-Bill's Short Flag

He Made a Lot of "Washout" Motions, but the Engineer on the Varnish Only Grinned

By James William Fraser

EVERY career has its beginning. The mechanic serves as an apprentice, the man of medicines his interneship, and the world's leading civil engineer no doubt once lugged a chain on the surveying gang.

And the railroader — oh, yes! He serves his greenhorn time, too. Even if he be the president of the road, it is a safe bet that he was put through the paces somewhere, sometime. Maybe it was in the back shop or on the rip track, maybe on the footboard, in the cab, in the caboose or in the telegraph office or freight house, all depending upon the way he worked up.

We all passed through that period

of vocational incubation, and dear to the heart, deep in the memory of every man who ever answered the call of the steel rails is that time. The road calls it by its own particular nomenclature. Whether the recollection brings a chuckle, a laugh, a shudder, or perhaps a tear, we all recall the days when we were known as and acted like—"Scissor-bills."

Every brakeman, for example, seems predestined to pass through that gantlet of new and strange experiences. Those times when he has to use his own judgment, use it in a hurry, and invariably does the wrong thing. Nevertheless he learns his lesson first-hand by actual contact with occasional critical situations.

Did you ever forget to release the hand brakes on a cut and highball the yard engine to take them away? Or neglect to cut in the air on the caboose? Or set the frogs backward and then try to rerail a car that was all over the ground?

I thought so. Well, then, you will appreciate the point that I am trying to put across.

Yes, yours truly did all of those things, and a few more, too. Well do I remember the little incident of my first short flag.

Back in Peoria, that prominent city that you sometimes read or sing about, I was working on the P. & P. U., a belt line that serves most of the fourteen roads in and around the central Illinois metropolis.

Never heard of the Peoria and Pekin Union? Ask any switchman—that pike has a reputation all of its own.

Ten miles of double track run down the east side of the Illinois River to Pekin. That is the main stem that accommodates a lot of passenger traffic in and out of the city. Braking the hind end of a work train over this short stretch occupied my gay young days during the late summer of 1916. I will confess that it kept me fairly busy as we dodged in and out among the first-class trains using the joint main.

"Use your time card, kid," old Bill Foster, the brains, used to tell me. "Read it over and watch that rear end. Keep the flag with you and give us all the distance you can."

Old Bill's advice was well put. The varnished cars used to bat it right along over that stretch.

One Sunday morning the work train caught an order to pull the mine tracks at Groveland instead of resting. Having no cars, we set the caboose out at Grove Tower, crossed over to the east-bound main and ran light for a mile and a quarter back to the mine switch.

Bill left me to watch the switch as he took the head man on the twelve spot and disappeared over the hills.

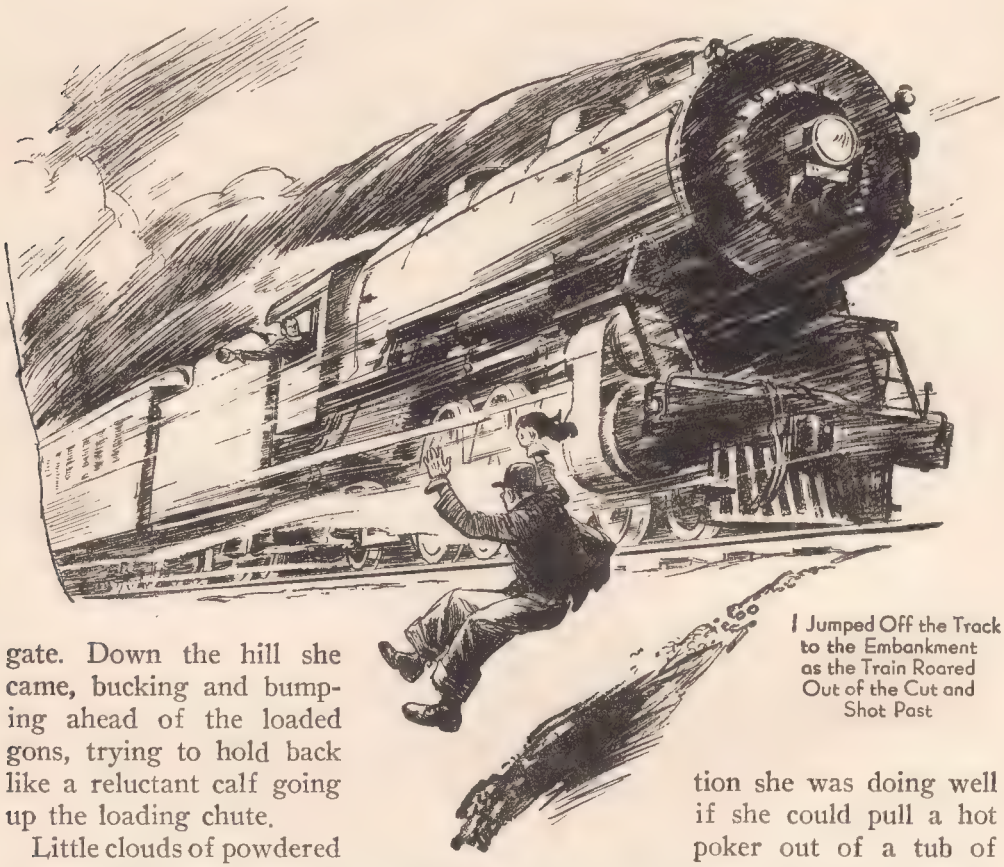
A gloriously warm, sunny, late summer's morning with a light silvery haze floating over the old Illinois. Birds chirped in the willow thickets that grew between the track and the river. Picnickers gathered in the meadows a short distance away. I sat on the right of way fence looking on, envying the lucky stiffs that could spend such a swell day frolicking with their girl friends.

That soon grew tiresome, so I climbed down and went over to the old set out coach that served as a station. Propped up against the side, half in and half out of the sunshine, I fell to studying the time card.

The C. & A. train No. 48 was due at Grove Tower in thirty-five minutes, that was all I had to keep in mind.

The drag most likely would not be back before the passenger cleared us.

The warm lulling atmosphere and my comfortable position was too much—I fell asleep. When I awoke the twelve spot was shrieking for the gate. Down the hill she came, bucking and bumping ahead of the loaded gons, trying to hold back like a reluctant calf going up the loading chute.



I Jumped Off the Track to the Embankment as the Train Roared Out of the Cut and Shot Past

Little clouds of powdered sand swirled from beneath the drivers, and old Bill stood on the footboard yelling and waving his arms.

I ran for the switch and checked the old Waterbury. 11.05 A.M. The C. & A. was long overdue; she must have passed while I was asleep.

I got the switch in plenty of time. The drag slid out onto the main line and down to the tower. I realigned the switch and waited. They came back, the No. 12 with a white feather waving about four hundred feet high above the cab, wheezing, groaning and spitting.

The goat was an old passenger engine off the North-Western; not designed to high tail along with a string of twenty cars. In her present condition she was doing well if she could pull a hot poker out of a tub of lard. Any one could have seen that the goat wasn't going to get far with that load; we were losing speed at every turn of the wheels. The gentle slope was too much for the old kettle.

We stopped. I swung down to the ground. Old Bill was waddling down the train. Halfway he stopped and cut off ten cars, leaving nine more and the caboose standing on the main while we doubled into Wesley.

The hogger hadn't whistled out any flag, so thinking of nothing better to

do, I climbed aloft and sat on top of the cupola. Out came the trusty time card again. The Big Four had a passenger due at 12.40 P.M., so there was nothing to worry about there.

The river view from the cupola top was charming. A big white packet steamed serenely along down the stream. Colored roustabouts sprawled along the boiler deck asleep, or squatted around the African golf game near the stern. Everything was calm, placid.

A wild, deep throated whistle from the rear lifted me about two feet off my seat. Horrified, I looked back. Just in time to see the dark maroon tops of passenger coaches slide swiftly from view into a deep cut scarcely a mile away.

The Alton, running late with a load of Sunday excursionists, was tearing blindly toward the rear half of the coal train standing in her path.

Two leaps took me to the end of the running board. The flag was a square red rag without a staff. For convenience I usually kept it tied loosely on the top bar of the ladder. Diving off the roof of the crummy feet first, I clutched wildly at the flag as I dropped. Fortunately it was within reach and readily jerked loose.

This was one of those times when a person lands running. I don't recall hitting the ground at all; there was no jolt from the drop that I can remember, but I do know that I was already traveling down the track when I met the earth.

Racing along the ties at top speed in the face of a rushing passenger train is real thrilling sport to say the least. I had covered no more than a quarter of a mile when I began to feel dizzy and exhausted from the excitement and exertion while a number of questions were shot through my brain.

How much longer must I go before the engineer could see the red rag waving madly above my head? Would I have to run beneath his very pilot? The blood was rushing to my head, my temples throbbed. I could not see clearly.

Two blasts of the passenger engine's whistle finally answered the flag. I jumped off the track to the embankment as the train roared out of the cut and shot past. The engine was working under a full head of steam. No shutting off, no screaming of brake shoes against flying wheels that accompanies the emergency stop. Instead, I saw the engineer leaning out of the cab window, laughing and waving his cap.

It was horrible. He must have suddenly gone insane.

I turned my back, too frightened to look. In another moment there would be a grand pile up of splintered coaches, twisted steel gondolas, tons of coal and helpless humans. All on my account. I vaguely wondered how many years on the rock pile I would have to serve to settle for this mess.

Did they crash? Was I a murderer? Or did the train finally stop with the nose of her pilot snuggled under the caboose platform?

They did not. I was not. It did not.

The tail end of the flying passenger faded over the hill still rolling merrily. I simply overlooked the fact that old Bill Foster would report the east main blocked when he left Grove Tower and that the towerman would send everything over the west main until we cleared at Wesley.

If you are an operator, turn to page 81

A Work Train on the Union Pacific in 1867. A Thousand Men Accompanied This "Extra," Laying Steel to the West

Steel to the West

An Hour's Talk with Lincoln Marked the First Definite Step Toward the Pacific Railroad

By Edwin C. Hill

LATE on the afternoon of August 12, 1859, every one idle in the old outfitters' town of Council Bluffs had gathered at the steamboat landing. As the stern-wheel river boat churned near, the sun was blackened by clouds of smoke from her twin funnels. A bell rang in the engine room, the lines were cast on, the gangplank run down, and a horde of passengers swarmed onto the muddy landing.

Then for a minute the noise of greetings was subdued. The crowd turned to gape at a remarkable passenger who had stepped from the boat. The crest of his stovepipe hat towered six feet four. His greenish-black frock coat was long enough and wide enough to make an overcoat for an ordinary man. No one so tall, gaunt, and determined-looking had ever been seen in Council Bluffs.

During the evening the stranger was an object of gossip, and next morning the local *Nonpareil* identified him:

"The Hon. Abe Lincoln and the Secretary of State for Illinois, the Hon. O. M. Hatch, arrived in our city last evening and are stopping at the Pacific House. The distinguished 'Sucker' has yielded to the solicitations of our citizens and will speak on political issues at Concert Hall this evening. Go and hear Old Abe."

The coming of Abraham Lincoln to Council Bluffs on that day, and his accidentally meeting a certain man on the morning after his speech, was the real beginning of the transcontinental railroad. For in his audience was the young civil engineer, Grenville M. Dodge. Dodge had squinted through a theodolite and followed a chain over a big chunk of the Nebraska Territory for the Rock Island, scouting for that rail route through the Rockies that the wiseacres of the day jeered at as a crack-brained delusion.

On the morning after Lincoln's speech Dodge sauntered over to the broad veranda of the Pacific Hotel, where he was introduced to Lincoln by W. H. M. Pusey, a man from Lincoln's home town. When the crowd had thinned out the fifty-year-old statesman, destined to be President of the United States within nineteen months, settled himself in one of the big comfortable chairs on the veranda, motioned the twenty-eight-year-old engineer into another, and began an hour's talk. Propping his feet against the railing, Lincoln asked:

"Dodge, what's the best route to the West for the Pacific Railroad to follow?"

"Right from Omaha across the river—out the Platte Valley, Mr. Lincoln."

It was Lincoln's whole-hearted belief in the soundness of the Pacific

Railroad scheme and in Dodge's ability that made the road possible.

In those days the doubters and scoffers were in an immense majority. Forty years before, Robert Mills had proposed a railroad from the head of the Mississippi Valley to the valley of the Columbia, only to have his proposal widely denounced as the most fantastic of chimeras. Captain William Tecumseh Sherman, writing to his brother John in Ohio, expressed what was in the minds of most people.

"A railroad to the Pacific? I would hate to buy a ticket on it for my grandchildren!"

But the idea persisted. Asa Whitney, a New York merchant, offered to build one out of his own funds if the government would give him a land grant thirty miles deep on each side. He spent all his money in the cause, and ended by driving a milk route in Washington. John Plumbe, of Iowa, was an enthusiast in the forties, and still others dreamed their dreams, but for years nothing came of them.

Weary Miles

In 1859 New York and San Francisco were five weeks apart by the Panama route. On the Overland Trail it took the stages seventeen days to cover the eighteen hundred miles between the Missouri and the Pacific. It took the plodding oxen of the pioneers three months or more, provided they managed to fight their way through the Indians, who were growing furious over the relentless oncoming of the white man and the rapid extinction of the buffalo.

The fastest route was the galloping Pony Express between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Placerville, California. The only freight these riders carried was tissue paper mail at one dollar per half ounce. They made it in eight days.

In 1861 the Overland Telegraph of the Western Union was opened.

Lincoln knew that the country was dividing into North and South, and that war could not be staved off. Which side was to win the great West? The importance of linking the West with the North was no doubt firm in his mind. Some sort of military railway was necessary over which national troops could be moved.

Both he and Grenville Dodge also believed that it could be made to pay commercially, although very few thought so. The doubters could not see where traffic would come from. There was little farming. The great cattle ranches were mostly in the Southwest, far from the Platte Valley route.

The doubters also pointed out that locomotives, feeble though they were, would have to carry their own fuel for hundreds of miles over sagebrush plains where not a stick of wood grew, or a lump of coal had been found. The mountain slopes were believed too mighty to be conquered, the altitudes too great for human endurance. The cost of building the road would be out of all reason, sure bankruptcy for the fools who would venture to finance it, possibly for the government should it father a venture so crazy.

So said practical men, the millionaires of the day, the big Wall Street financiers and mighty merchants ridiculing the suggestion that a railroad could be laid down over two thousand miles of country, desert and wilderness crawling with hostile Indians, bare of white population and without settlements, towns, farms—without hope of business anywhere from the Missouri to the Pacific.

Then, while Lincoln was taking office, while the cannon were beginning to roar over the battlefields of the South, groups in California and in New York began definitely to agitate for the Pacific Railroad. Busy in California was a young engineer named Theodore D. Judah, who had built a road down the gorge of the Niagara River for the Troy and Schenectady Railroad.

Convinced that California must have a railroad to the East, he began making independent surveys in the late fifties, and did what he could to stir up an uninterested Congress. Surveys assured him that a road over the Sierras was possible, and he went to work in San Francisco to raise money for it. It was hopeless. People laughed outright at the suggestion.

General Grenville M. Dodge, Chief Engineer on the Building of the Union Pacific. Appointed in 1866

Then Judah went to Sacramento and got the attention of four extraordinary men: Collis P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins. All four were prosperous business men in Sacramento, but not wealthy. Perhaps they had a million among them. Huntington and Hopkins ran the largest hardware store in town. Stanford and Crocker were also merchants. Stanford had dabbled a little in local politics.

Ten Cents on the Dollar

JUDAH convinced them that a railroad could be built over the mountains with government help at immense profit to themselves. On June 28, 1861, the Central Pacific Railroad Company of California was organized at Sacramento. Engineer Judah climbed back into the Sierras to complete his surveys for a road which would wind from Dutch Flat over the mountains to Lake Truckee, following the Truckee River. He reported late in the same year, and then Huntington went East to stir up "those fellows in Congress," and see what could be wheedled from the financial giants.

Stanford, Crocker and Hopkins tried to peddle stock at home. Few

were willing to take a chance with what they believed a fool scheme. Only a short while later Stanford bought twenty-three hundred shares of Central Pacific stock at ten cents on the dollar to let out a friend who had got cold chills. In New York the big bankers turned Huntington down flatly. D. O. Mills was one of them. The company managed to scrape up a few hundred thousand dollars from cities and towns along the proposed route, but that was not a drop in the bucket.

It was President Lincoln, aided by Congress, who saved the situation by passing the Pacific Railroad Bill on July 1, 1862, one of the richest subsidies ever granted. In addition to helping the Central Pacific it created a second continental railway, the Union Pacific.

Government born and national in scheme, the Union Pacific operated under Federal charter. The government pledged its credit to the road's promoters, and there was nothing of the Shylock about Uncle Sam in those days. In the Union Pacific directorate were Oakes and Oliver Ames, of Boston, shovel and tool makers; Thomas C. Durant, a shrewd, aggressive, experienced railroad man; the Casement brothers, General Jack and Dan, valiant fighters and all grit from head to heel; John Duff, of Boston; Sidney Dillon, of New York, and Grenville M. Dodge.

Shortly afterward Congress and the President ordered the Secretary of the Treasury to issue to the Central Pacific a series of United States six per cent thirty-year bonds, in amounts varying from $16,000 to $48,000 per mile, the average being about $30,000. The biggest grants were for the difficult mountain sections of construction. The Union Pacific had received about the same terms amounting to a loan of some $35,000,000 and a bonus of about 6,000,000 acres of land in sections along the right of way.

But the belief of Congress and the President that the people would support a national road proved an illusion. Nobody would buy these government bonds. Big moneyed men shied off and small investors took to their heels. Two years afterward the bill was amended, practically doubling the subsidies in bonds and land.

From that hour the construction of the road was assured, but the promoters still had a hard row to hoe. The war was dragging on. Gold was at a heavy premium, and for a long time the bonds were a drug on the market. Both railroads did hectic financiering in those days, financiering which was to grow into such national scandals as the Crédit Mobilier.

Vice President Huntington of the Central Pacific was in New York trying to turn these government bonds into gold; for gold was the only money California people would accept. Even the Chinese that Charles Crocker brought to the road in hordes when he began to race the Union Pacific had to be paid in gold, and on many a dead Chinaman was later found fifty-dollar slugs.

In San Francisco, President Stanford of the railroad pledged his own paper and that of Huntington, Crocker and Hopkins. Crocker was intrusted with building the first eighteen miles. When he started he had $200,000 of his own. When he finished he was bankrupt and almost ready to give up—but not quite. He hung on, and the great Crocker fortune of California is the result to-day, as are the Huntington fortune and the vast estate of Leland Stanford.

"There was a time," said Charles Crocker later, "when I would have been glad to take a clean shirt and lose a railroad."

The Union Pacific in the East was having its money troubles, too. The Ameses of Boston, Dillon and Durant, were attempting the financing, but the war hit heavier in the East than in the remote West. About all the U. P. backers could do, even with government help, was to mark time and wait for the end of the war. They laid plans to start at Omaha.

Three years after the signing of the first Pacific Railroad Bill, earth was turned on the U. P. right of way. Not until July 19, 1865, was the first rail laid and the first spike driven at Omaha. The war was over and Lincoln was in his grave before the first resolute, uninterrupted construction started from East to West.

The Big Four out in California, with local aid and less distraction from the echoes of war, had been able to make a start more than two years earlier. The breaking of ground for the Central Pacific had taken place in K Street at Sacramento on January 8, 1863, with Stanford turning the first spadeful. Ahead of them was forty miles of difficult engineering and terrific labor before they could draw upon the government bond and land subsidies, theirs being a private corporation, and without special privileges. At last the C. P. was on its way, with the grim comment from Huntington:

"If the Central Pacific ever stops short of completion, C. P. Huntington will be so badly broken that you will never spend any time picking him up."

Hopeful Start

THE Central Pacific started to build out of Sacramento on a day wet and drizzly enough to dampen the spirits of even the Big Four. Brass bands played, banners drooped in the downpour, and high-hearted speeches were made to a crowd near the levee, standing on bundles of straw to keep their feet dry. The peppery Charles Crocker called for nine cheers, and at that minute the sun came out brightly. Every one felt as though the fates had granted a good omen.

But seven hundred miles of inhuman toil lay ahead. Tremendous gulches and cañons must be spanned. A way had to be found over a mountain pass more than seven thousand feet high. Trails were impassable. Avalanches were frequent. Snowsheds must be built, labor recruited, material assembled and distributed, frozen earth blasted.

Supplies had to be bought in the East and brought around Cape Horn. Prices were amazing. About the only local materials were ties, timber and masonry. Every pound of iron had to come by steamship, and delivery often took six months. Since Congress had specified that only American iron was to be used, ironmakers had boosted prices to the limit. For the first fifty miles of rails, some 5,000 tons, the Central paid $115 a ton at New York and Boston. For smaller lots they had to pay $267.50 a ton, and to that must be added $17.50 for shipping around the Horn. By the Isthmus of Panama freighting cost $50 a ton. Insurance rates jumped from three to fifteen per cent.

Years later it was estimated that the road could have been built sixty or seventy per cent cheaper had not the necessity for speed been so pressing.

Cross-ties were worth almost their weight in silver, because of the cost of hauling them through the mountains

and the carelessness of the labor. One day Huntington was inspecting construction in the Wasatch Mountains when he came across some teams hauling ties.

"They had seven ties on a wagon," he reported later. "I asked them where they were hauled from. They named a certain cañon and said it took three days to pull a load to the top of the Wasatch Mountains and get back to their work. I asked them what they charged a day for their teams, and they said ten dollars. This would make the cost of each tie more than $6. I passed back that way one night in January and found a big fire blazing near the summit. The men had, I think, some twenty or twenty-five ties burning. They said it was so cold they could not stand it without a fire."

The first locomotive delivered to the Central Pacific cost $13,688, and the first ten $191,000. The second ten cost $215,000. These were engines of only twenty or thirty tons, with cylinders from eleven by eighteen to eighteen by thirty inches. Ocean and Panamanian freight rates were as high as $8,100 apiece. They arrived in San Francisco knocked down, and were assembled at Sacramento. Passenger coaches cost $3,500 apiece and flat cars $600. Even hand cars were listed at $160. And all these prices were in gold, worth twice as much as paper money.

Spikes cost six and a half cents a pound. Treasurer Mark Hopkins had to O. K. bills for fishplates costing as high as $6.50 per hundred pounds, and bar iron at $115 a ton. Once the timber belt was passed ties mounted to $8 each, exceeding even Huntington's bitter arithmetic.

Eighteen miles had been completed in the early winter of 1863. Crocker bossed the job, raging like a lunatic up and down the line as he drove the graders and track layers. Bridging the American River almost broke the company. They kept on for another thirty-one miles to Newcastle, fighting not only Nature in her wildest moods, but public sentiment.

Public opinion was set against the road. Californians called it the "Dutch Flat Swindle," and the East took this cue and tightened its pocketbook. Labor was scarce. Men asked why they should swing a pick or stagger under heavy rails in blizzard weather when they could make a good living panning gold. The contractors began to bid against each other for men, and the price of labor leaped to impossible heights.

Then the newspapers attacked the Big Four. Moneyed men were frigid to all proffers of bonds. Many lawsuits were pending. The Central Pacific's treasury was as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. General Grant had been defeated at Cold Harbor, sending another scare over the East. A gold dollar became worth nearly three times as much as a paper dollar.

Almost overnight, however, the outlook brightened. The war ended and money eased. Congress provided more funds and permitted the Central to extend its borrowing power.

Encouraged and heartened, Crocker kept driving, driving. Pictures show this indomitable man raging up and down the line, his black beard whirled by the wind, calling upon the track layers for speed and more speed, cursing, storming, threatening, appealing, and always pounding ahead.

Crocker's Pets

THE white labor problem grew serious, so he hired Chinese. In 1865,

before the Union Pacific was begun in Omaha, Crocker had 7,000 Chinese toiling along the right of way.

The Irish left on the pay roll were furious. "Yelly divvels," they called the Chinamen. Crocker discharged the Irish.

"You can't use Chinese for railroad building," friends were protesting. abuse for a dollar a day. At the beginning of his Chinese experiment Crocker paid the recruits $26 a month. Later they got $30 and eventually $35.

They proved efficient and thoroughly reliable. To them the big boss with the black beard was "Mista Clockee," and they were dubbed "Mista Clockee's pets." Under the spur of Crock-

The Pony Express Saluting the Telegraph Which Preceded the Blazing of the Big Iron Road

"They're no good for such work as masonry."

"Oh, they're not!" roared Charles Crocker. "They built the Chinese Wall, didn't they?"

He recruited all the Chinese he could in California and then sent to China for more. At one time he had 11,000 of them. They migrated to the road in queerly shaped basket hats, blue blouses and flapping pantaloons, carrying their scanty outfits in knotted bundles over their shoulders, ready to face heat, cold, storm, toil and American er's vitality and resolution they shuttled back and forth like ants, dug and delved, blasted mountains and carried away the fragments, endured the bitterest of cold and the most burning heat with unvarying amiability and patience.

The Central rested in September of 1865 nearly half a mile above sea level at Illinois Town. Less than a hundred miles had been built when winter gripped the mountains. But things were still looking up. Gross earnings of the little road already built had

risen to more than a thousand dollars a day with passenger rates at ten cents a mile and freight at fifteen. Public opinion was veering. The inflexible resolution of the Big Four had won admiration.

At Omaha the Union Pacific had started to build westward. A great race was on, with untold millions as the trophy.

Ground had been broken at Omaha by the Union Pacific two years earlier, but the war and lack of money had held up the real start until 1865. On July 10 the first length of iron rail was dropped by the Irish rail layers, and the first spike sent home with ringing blows.

Grenville Dodge, the chief engineer, was not present. He had been building railroads for the army, putting rails back as fast as the Confederates could tear them up. He had organized a secret service for General Grant. Later he had been sent west to curb the hostile Indians. He had gone scouting in the Sioux country, hunted for the pass through the Black Hills which the Indians had told him about.

Through that pass the transcontinental trains on the U. P. thunder today—Sherman Pass, in honor of Dodge's friend.

Relieved by the War Department from military duty, Dodge took full charge of the Union Pacific construction. Finances of the railroad were to be handled by the Crédit Mobilier, an organization of stockholders. It was up to Dodge to build as fast and as far as possible in order to realize upon the government and company bonds. At his back was a well-organized force of 10,000 specialists and laborers, mostly Irish. Many of them were discharged soldiers, men who knew how to obey orders. It was other matters that brought lines of worry to General Dodge's forehead.

At the start tremendous pressure was brought upon him to follow the Overland Trail through the Valley of the Platte and to strike along the Oregon trail through Denver and the wide, gradually sloping South Pass. But Dodge had another plan. He would not risk the delay of winter storms in the South Pass region, and the detours required for the road to pass through Denver. He announced that he would break a new trail through southern Wyoming.

Denver and Salt Lake City were outraged. Brigham Young preached fiery sermons in the Mormon Tabernacle, calling down the wrath of the Almighty upon the Union Pacific. But Dodge stuck to his Black Hills plan.

Work for the General

WHAT Dodge had before him at Omaha was to build 1,100 miles of railroad at unheard-of speed through desert and unexplored country, crossing three mountain ranges at the highest elevations ever attempted by an American railroad, extending for hundreds of miles through country swarming with hostile Indians who were repeatedly slaughtering engineers and construction crews. He must build upon a route destitute of water, find the enormous amounts of iron, lumber, provisions and supplies necessary and transport them for five hundred to fifteen hundred miles.

Furthermore, the Union Pacific's base was on the frontier side of the unbridged Missouri, upon which navigation was good scarcely three months a year. The nearest delivery points for supplies from the East were St. Louis, from where they must be transported 300 miles up river, and at the

terminus of the railroad then building across Iowa—the Chicago and North Western, a hundred miles away. As the U. P. fought onward, such difficulties increased. Great terminal bases had to be created—the roaring towns of the U. P.

As in the case of the Central Pacific, costs were fantastic—fuel wood was $100 a cord, grain $7 a bushel, hay $34 a ton, iron shipped by boat or rail $138 a ton. For 540 miles along the U. P. right of way there was no large timber available except cottonwood, which rots easily. Quantity oak had to come from Pennsylvania and New York, and ties cost from $3 to $4 each.

In five months Dodge laid down 180 miles of track. The year 1866 closed with the record of 260 miles laid in exactly eight months, an average of more than a mile a day. No such railroad building had ever been dreamed of.

A Wagon Supply Train Moving Down into Echo Cañon to Bring Food and Provisions to the Grading Outfits

Dodge's chief of construction was Jack Casement, known as the Little General. He was five feet tall, tough as whipcord, and full of energy as a steam engine. It was General Jack's job to tame the bad men who flocked to the roaring terminal towns—to put a lot of them under the sod, in fact.

At the end of track the side supply spurs were always choked with material; hundreds of tons of iron and thousands of ties. The take down warehouses of Casement and Company, handy sheet iron affairs providing cot space and dining room for the laborers, awaited the hour of moving on. Grunting construction trains rolled continually up to the insatiable maw of the advancing line.

There were the boarding train for the track gangs, dining cars and bunk cars, the combined stores and office cars, each eighty feet long, with beds made up atop and hammocks slung to braces and trucks underneath. There was the endless line of dusty wagons toiling on and on with their mountains of stores and materials—ties, hay, flour, wheat, meat. Ahead were the toiling workers on the leveled grade.

All these activities were organized with one object—to lay track rapidly. Laying track was almost reduced to mathematics. First the boarding train was shoved to the very end of the line. The first construction train pulled in, halted and dumped its load of rails, ties, spikes and fishplates. Then came a smaller iron truck. The rail squads, five men to a squad, lifted two rails simultaneously to this truck and ran them out to the very end of track. The squad bosses gave the signal and down went the rails. The chief spiker was ready. The gauger lined them up.

Jack Casement had been a soldier. His gangs worked with the sureness of discipline. Many of his men had served in the Union or Confederate armies as generals, colonels, majors or captains. There were any number of sergeants and corporals. Casement carried a train that could arm a thousand men, and hardly a week passed but the raiding Sioux would swoop down. As the line progressed more than ten thousand of the hardest fighting red men—mostly Cheyennes and Sioux—were massing to block the progress of the Iron Horse.

Far to the west the Central Pacific was still fighting. Freed by Congress from the restriction that it must not build more than 150 miles east of the California line, it was redoubling its energies to climb the mountains and beat the Union Pacific across the bitter lands into Ogden.

When Crocker heard that the U. P. had hit a stride of better than a mile a day he really started to drive his army, now composed of 11,000 Chinese, 2,500 white men and a thousand teams. His bill for black powder alone swelled to $64,000 a month as he broke through the mountains. Sixty feet of snow had to be shoveled by hand out of the winter-locked ravines. Hundreds of patient Chinese were overtaken and buried in landslides, and in the herculean powder blasts. The Central Pacific forged ahead.

Back in the Indian country young William F. Cody had been hired to kill buffalo as food for the U. P. tracklayers, since the cost of beef was prohibitive. Buffalo Bill saw danger signs. The coming of the railroads meant the extinction of the great herds of buffalo, and with the buffalo the Indian would have to go.

He told this to Dodge, and that the Sioux would never quit without a desperate fight.

"You are right, Bill, they'll fight," agreed Dodge. "And we can't expect much help from the army. They don't realize the situation. Most of my men can sight a rifle as well as sling a pick. I guess it's up to us."

TO BE CONTINUED

Honk and Horace

By Emmet F. Harte

Illustrated by Walter De Maris

His Bow Wave and Backwash Combined to Work Havoc

The Ex-Brakeman Plays Cupid to the Cuddle-Shy Commodore With the Aid of Homemade Sea Mines

HAVE you ever been on the extra list? Oh, you have, hey! Bully. I hope you are eating regularly again. By the way, have you paid up your back board bill—well, never mind. Weeks passed, as they say in the subtitles. Then Honk accepted a position as frog-hopper in the yards. He was on the dead watch, toiling in the night time. Two months. Mostly winter weather. But winter in Valhalla isn't as severe as in Duluth. Here it's merely rainy, with spells when it expectorates snow. Nice drizzly, low visibility weather.

Meanwhile I copped a few trips as shack on freight as the infrequent opportunity offered. In a moment of desperation I responded to an alluring advertisement for a salesman. Experience not essential, we train you. The word "train" fooled me. It looked good. I went on foot and rang the doorbells of houses, one by one. I lugged a nickel-plated vacuum sweeper on my person, and carrying a vacuum sweeper all day in a drizzling rain, while ringing doorbells and getting rebuffed, is one of life's grandest tests of mental, moral and muscular stamina. You either make $3.48 a week in commissions, or you get to hate the human race, or both.

I had one or two prosperous days that season. I ran a worn two-bit

piece up to $9 in a brilliant sequence of naturals while resting in a dog-house down in the lower yards. That was along toward spring. Being in funds for a few days, I cached my cleaning device and passed up the doorbells. The sun broke through the clouds, too, about this time, and my compatriot, Hancock Simpson, issued from his den for a vernal bath in the golden rays.

So we were sitting in a row from left to right on a baggage truck at the far end of the station platform one balmy afternoon when Fortuna smote us with her wand.

Number 34 from the west whammed in. Robert Fulton Richards swung off the front steps of the smoker and lit abreast of us. Some call him "Bob" and some call him "Bert." Richards is a good scout—superintendent of water service. He directs the activities of supplying aqua pura for some 3,000 or 5,000 engines, owned and operated by the Transcontinental System. Richards can look at a bucket of water and tell you what it 'll do to a locomotive boiler.

"Hullo," Richards yelped. "The twin chimpanzees, by Gemini! Say, are you two loafers working? Do you know where I can hire a couple of men with strong backs and weak heads for fat salaried positions?"

Honk and I both sat up. Fat salaried positions, eh? We spoke in chorus. Where, when and what were these attractive sounding openings? Speak up. Say it without mumbling or mincing words. We might know two men who were divinely fitted for the places.

"The jobs are at Swan Lake pumping station," Richards said. "Sixty miles west of here. A little ways south of Gypsum Junction. The two birds I had there got mad at each other and had a fight. Both quit. It's a soft snap. Fifteen a week per each, and a palatial residence furnished free. Finest fishing in the known world right in front of you."

"Fishing," I murmured. "Did you say fishing?"

"I said fishing," Bert reiterated. "Swan Lake is a piscatorial paradise. Perch, pike, pickerel, bass, crappie, cat, carp, trout, tarpon, barracuda, shark, whale—"

"I know," I cut in, "and you use live cows for bait. All right, we'll take the jobs. When do we start fishing?"

"Just a second," Honk objected. "I don't think—"

"Nobody has accused you of it," Richards reminded him. "I forgot to say there's swell society at Swan Lake. Big clubhouse right across the water. Bathing, boating, regattas, dancing, gambling, eating, drinking, everything. You can paddle over evenings and mingle with the best—"

"Good, we'll take the jobs," Honk announced with a glint in his eyes.

"Get packed, then," Bob ordered. "We'll catch No. 43 in an hour. I'll go with you goofs and get you lined up."

That was how we became important cogs in the great machinery of the water service department. There are a lot of things I don't know about water. Honk has quite a sprinkling of knowledge on the subject. He can quote figures and formulas.

We arrived at Gypsum Junction at 5.30 P.M. that same day. I'd taken time to buy a small stock of fishing lines, hooks, sinkers, and such like before starting from Valhalla. Honk also attended to some small matters of a sartorial nature, but I didn't find that out until later. Personally I meant to go back to nature; let my whiskers

grow, raise me a set of shoulder length curls, and wear a straw sombrero and bib overalls. As a matter of fact, I have the devil-may-care soul of an unshorn Cossack beneath my thin veneer of seeming stylishness. At heart I'm rough and ready, a despiser of scented baths, frills, and fastidious fol-de-rols. Privately, I am content to call myself a "roughneck."

The so-called residence which was supplied rent free with our pumping positions consisted of a two-room wooden house, painted yellow. It was of the simplest architectural plan known to building science. Roof, walls, and floor—no doo-dads like porches. Just house.

Inside there was a stove, pine table, stools, some pots and pans, tinware, and odd pieces of ironstone china and cutlery. The extra room contained a couple of bunks with straw ticks and blankets. Nothing to go into raptures over. Rather an outfit to be put through a drastic process of lye and fumigation.

"Well, here she is, men," Richards said, waving a flipper like Lord Bountiful presenting a fair estate to two faithful retainers. "All you two tramps have to do is keep the fire hot and the pump clacking. Coal's in the bin and scoops are provided. Don't be afraid to use lubricating oil on the engine and pump now and then. So long."

II

The emergency pumper, a hostler's assistant from the Junction roundhouse, departed. Bert took him in the borrowed Rolls-Royster. We were alone with each other in paradise; piscatorial paradise. Honk proposed that we flip a coin of the realm to determine who first essayed the twelve-hour night shift. I flipped. He won the night trick.

It was agreed that we should handle the tricks a week about, trading back and forth alternately. One would work and the other would sleep, or fish, or *vice versa,* as the case might be. An admirable arrangement.

It was at this point that I beheld a nook in the corner of our joint bedroom, a shrewd contrivance in its construction. Some previous dweller had nailed a couple of three-cornered boards in the angle, making shelves, and hung a tapestry curtain from the upper shelf, a length of burlap, forming a closet.

On closer inspection I found it just the berries for my fishing paraphernalia.

But no. Honk paused to proclaim prior rights. "Keep your smelly junk out of there," he growled. "That's my wardrobe. I'll need it for my society clothes presently."

A little clever questioning brought out the rest. He had an orgy of social jamborees in mind, it seemed. Before leaving Valhalla he'd arranged with a tailor to make him a complete outfit of cake-eater clothes; yachting suit of blue and white flannel; tennis pants, duck; polo pants, peg tops; evening suit, tuxedo; and so on, including roll-top stockings for golf. A $65 a month pumper going in for society! Sublime absurdity.

A grocery delivery truck arrived with supplies from the Junction, and interrupted my remarks on the subject. Honk seized the chance to escape to the pumphouse where he busied himself with scoop and oil can for some time. I unpacked my hooks and lines.

Among the appurtenances we'd inherited with our new position and the lake front property accompanying it,

was a rowboat with one oar. I found it 33 per cent under water. But there were lots of empty cans available for bailing. I proceeded to put things in working order for a sustained, intensive campaign of plain and fancy fishing.

Atta boy! My hair and whiskers were already beginning to grow. Dulcet days! Silver moonlight, lapping waters. I began to dream dreams of never leaving this charmed spot, of spending my declining years here among these sequestered coves and lily-padded pools, fishing and eating lotuses. Golden days and silver nights, by Aquarius!

I hurriedly got the boat into seaworthy shape, took my tackle and some liver and bacon for bait, and paddled out on the lake's velvet bosom among the reflections of the eternal stars. I moored my bark to an ancient snag and began weaving my magic web of throw-lines flung out like spokes of a wheel around me. Fishing relaxes both body and soul. It seems to serve as both tonic and sedative. It stimulates and also soothes.

Then, suddenly, I caught the low patter of a disturbing sound. A minute later it had increased to a drumming rat-tat-tat, and then to a belching, booming uproar. Down the middle of the lake zoomed one of those ear-splitting devices called speed boats, or power sleds.

The devil's pet imp who was running the cursed craft evidently used my mooring snag for a turning buoy, and he was one of those death-defying amateurs who revel in stunt stuff. He tried to miss my refuge by a hair's breadth as he turned. And he barely made it. A hair's breadth was liberal. His bow wave and back wash, combined, worked havoc. The one overwhelmed me with a twenty-foot wall of water, and the other exposed the bottom of the lake. My boat capsized three times and ended right side up, full of water, with me in it standing on my head. From far up the lake sounded the diminishing crackle of firing.

If there had been any fish in my vicinity they were in their holes with the storm doors fastened by that time. Out of the calm night the evil bird had come, and into the night he'd vanished like a detonating meteor. I called down on him the great curse. I hoped he'd find woolly worms in his salad, and that he'd perish miserably of old age on a desert island with sandburrs in his hair and fleas biting him. Then I took in my lines, bailed out my scow with my hat, and paddled grimly ashore.

III

A MYSTERIOUSLY queer affiliation seemed to have been formed by that first night's mix-up with the motor-sled hellion. On days that followed I had only to make a feint at fishing, and here he would come roaring down the lake. It was uncanny. Once or twice I got a nibble, but before I could jerk there'd come the wild barbarian rat-tat of leaping Liza, and every finny denizen would scuttle for cover. I wondered if it wouldn't be better to take a club and do my fishing in the weeds and underbrush along the shore. All the fish with sufficient life in 'em to wiggle would be out on the bank hiding in the tall grass, surely. Upon inquiry I learned the name of the crazed Volga boatman. He was called "Commodore" Bowers, first name Arthur. His marine title was wholly assumed apparently as his sea service had been confined to fresh waters,

from all reports. In appearance he was fashioned like a Greek god, to use a hackneyed comparison, but devoid of average intelligence. Beautiful but cuckoo. Tall, black haired, slim waisted, a perfect Apollo. A lad to kill ladies.

I acquired a kind of yelling acquaintance with him in passing. I called him different things when he came within hail. He got to waving a jaunty greeting as he went by like a deafening streak.

"Loon! Vile reptile! Sea cook! Scum skimmer of the scuppers! Earth's supreme nitwit!" I'd bellow.

But he couldn't hear me. He couldn't have heard a siege gun. And he thought I was applauding him. I figured on various plans to rid the lake of him. Mines and bombs were among them. The proudest moment of my adventurous life would have been to see him hit a mine and go up in a spray of fragments. But he was too erratic to hit a mine.

One day his engine choked to death while I was calling him "a spotted lizard and a foul-stinking cross between a dogfish and a sewer rat" or something. He heard me and talked back. "Go take a mud bath, you long-whiskered roughneck!" he yapped. Then his motor started with a bang, and away he went while I screamed invitations to him to come ashore and get beat up. So-o! All I reminded him of was a "roughneck," eh? I stood under a blasted oak, and vowed a terrible vow of vengeance.

A week or two passed, and Honk's outfit of society togs began to come by parcel post, express, and deadhead in care of baggage busters who knew him. Pretty soon he was all set for his début over at the clubhouse where the spring hoo-doo was getting well under way, so he said. It seemed that all the Valhalla swell set had moved to Swan Lake for the summer, and big doings were contemplated. The Dupont-Skaggses, Armitages, Fairleighbridges, Arbuthnots, Harry Higginses, Chitwoods, Carter Finleys—in fact the entire One Hundred had come to reside in bungalows and at the Barracks, an enormous hotel built like a storage warehouse. During the periods when Honk was on day shift and free to ramble at night he donned his foolish clothes and paddled himself across the lake to engage in sundry bridge parties, dances, dinners, and functions which he described at tiresome length next morning at breakfast. That is, breakfast for him, but dinner for me.

IV

With a little exploring I discovered an inlet, or bayou, ambushed in a jungle of high reeds where the roaring commodore couldn't penetrate with his diabolical power sled. There I enjoyed hours of happy fishing. One other devoted angler frequented the bayou. A youngish, slow-moving, quiet fellow who fished from a favorite log under a drooping willow tree. For several days we made no conversational contacts.

We finally got acquainted oddly enough. He was squatting on his log, and I sat in my boat maybe fifty yards distant. The stillness was absolute. Not a leaf stirred. All at once there was a splash. The young man on the log had fallen into the water. I dipped my paddle and scooted nearer, as he scrambled out, looking like a wet and crestfallen puppy.

"Went to sleep," he explained. "Makes a person feel silly to wake up in the water."

"It's drowsy weather," I said. "I

fish from a boat for safety first. If I drop off I don't drop in." He laughed sluggishly at the witticism.

We got quite chummy in the course of time. His name was David, or Dave, Thorne. He was a kind of lone wolf. His father had died a year or so before and left him a small wad of dough, enough to keep him fed and clothed. His father was the multi-millionaire, Matthew Thorne, a former director of the Transcontinental. I'd heard of him, and I wondered why his son pretended to be fishing his life away on a paltry pittance. Later on, Dave confided the sad story to me. He had been gypped, as it were.

"After my mother's death," he said, "the old gent got entangled in the butterfly net of an elderly gold digger. She was the ex-wife of Kenwood Squibb, the famous architect, and had been married two or three times before that more or less successfully. A veteran man catcher. One of these small, elastic women who stay cute till the end, and knows all the tricks to make a monkey out of a man. Well, she bagged Matthew Thorne in no time at all. She deserves credit. Not many ever fooled the pater, out of all that tried it. Even with her foxy wiles and baby face, Mrs. Hester Thorne, *née* Squibb *et al,* failed to pull the wool completely over the old man's eyes.

"He sewed her up in a sack when he made his final will. The estate was around two million, a third of it in the home and furnishings which must be preserved intact. It's up the Hudson River, not a great ways from Sleepy Hollow. Mrs. Hester gets the income from a million bucks during her natural life—if she doesn't marry. If she does, it stops. She can't touch the principal in any event. That galls her. For she's a marrying kid. She's spent a good many years learning the knack of it. It's her hobby."

"And your dad cut you off with the same as nothing—" I commented.

"No, he left me about a third of a million. I've still got it. It's a nice little stake. If and when the widow dies or marries, of course I'll come into the whole estate, including the home and everything in it. So I'm fishing and biding my time."

"Ah—ahem!" I offered, with a meaning look. "Fatal accidents sometimes happen. A misstep and a fall down a stairway, or a piece of bronze or marble will tumble off a shelf. Or there are certain obscure poisons—"

"Ho! Ho!" he chortled. "You've been reading the different colored murder cases which are so much the rage of late. My way is much more refined and elegant. I'm planning to marry the old lady off as soon as possible."

"Great!" I approved. "You're a sly villain. Your stuff's high class. Is there a prospective candidate in sight for the part of gay Lothario to your stepmamma's rôle of painted vampire?"

"Yes and no," Dave confessed. "I've got a victim spotted, but he's sort of cuddle-shy. The widow's got her eye on him, though. One of these days he'll miss going out in that demon speed boat of his, and Mrs. Hester will grab him for keeps."

"You don't mean the commodore?" I whispered hoarsely.

"That's the baby. Bow-wow Bowers. She'll marry him in a minute if she ever gets him cornered. Provided, of course, he can make a noise like ready money."

"He can—I'm almost positive he can," I declared. "We've got to fix it somehow so he'll be reeking with riches. It 'll be a regular romance."

"Right-o!" said Dave Thorne dryly. "It's a nifty scheme—if it works."

V

A DAY or two later Honk came romping home from a session with the idle rich all of a twitter from excitement. He spilled with a fevered dream. We discussed it over the coffee and corn fritters, he in his tuxedo outfit, I in my denims, bearded like a real pard.

"We Have Been Like Fond Lovers, Treading the Fairy Aisles of a Flower Garden"

"I have made a supreme decision, old chum," he announced. "This squalid existence stifles me. I long for a wider, freer, higher sphere. So I've reasoned things out calmly and logically, and found the solution to my problem. I've made up my mind to get married and settle down. Frankly, I intend to marry money. Big money."

He paused. I did not immediately burst into frenzied speech. When I spoke my words were halting and uncertain. He had shocked me.

"I suppose your decision is final," I quavered. "Do I know the lady?"

"I think not, Horace. She is from the East. New York. A wonderful woman. Beautiful, cultured, sophisticated, a paragon of grace and charm. And immensely wealthy. I have ascertained that she owns an enormous block of stock in this railroad. I shall maneuver it so that I can swing myself into a snug berth. I have my eye on the presidency of the Transcontinental System. When that happens I'll take care of you, naturally. A vice presidency wouldn't be bad, eh? Don't worry, my boy. Then I shall have my home life, too. Our home will be a model of elegance and hospitality. A

social shrine, you know. It's up the Hudson, a grand mansion. Mrs. Thorne—"

"Mrs. Thorne?" I echoed. "Is—is she the—the one—"

"But yes," he replied bombastically. "She's the widow of Matthew Thorne the multi-pluto-millionaire. I didn't suspect that you knew her."

"I—I've heard of her," I sighed. "But I've never seen her."

Whereupon he went temporarily cup grease in his fervor of describing what Mrs. Hester Simpson-to-be was like.

"Is the wedding day set?" I managed to insert in his rhapsody.

"Well, not definitely," he admitted. "We haven't got down to prosaic matters yet. But she will name the day whenever I make it a paramount issue. So far we have been—ah—like fond lovers treading the fairy aisles of a flower garden, basking in dreamland—"

My mind clicked and began to revolve smoothly again. I understood what had happened. Mrs. Thorne was merely flirting with him. Practicing up, using him for a training partner. She had no intention of marrying him.

"Old comrade," I said, with a pretense of deep emotion, "I want you to promise me one thing. A solemn covenant between us. Swear to me that you will let me stand up with you as your best man when you take that last terrible step in the dark. Give me your word of honor that you won't get married without me being present."

"Of course. Certainly I'll give you that pledge," he agreed, and shook hands on it. "I meant to insist upon you being my best man, Horace, anyway. Absolutely."

The point being settled, I sought my bunk with a light heart. If an emergency arose I could stop the wedding at the altar somehow. At least I'd be present, and organized for a rescue. Honk shucked his romantic raiment, donned his working robes, and retired to the pumphouse to stoke the firebox, listen to the rhythmic chug of the water-jerker, and invite his soul in an atmosphere of rancid oil and hot steam. Meanwhile I slept the sleep of a shaggy bear cub, and my subconscious mind made medicine. The hated personality of the commodore popped in and out of my dreams. I couldn't rid myself of the idea that he was going to be an important ingredient in the human stew I planned to cook up in the near future.

Dave Thorne and I continued to fish and concoct strategic plans in the secluded bayou. He was aware of his stepmother's affair with my coadjutor, Hancock Simpson. He agreed with me that Honk wasn't exposed to anything but a lot of prattle. "Hester's just sharpening her claws on your friend," Dave said. "She may get engaged to him for pastime, but when somebody comes along with a wad of real money, or what glitters like it, the old girl will push your buddy over a cliff without a compunction."

"And the commodore," I questioned. "What's the outlook in that quarter?"

"She's keeping one eye on him. But he's still speed-boat-addled. He's out buzzing up and down the lake sixteen hours a day. He'll get tired of it presently."

"He's completely crimped the deep water fishing," I asserted. "He's a scurrilous nuisance. I abhor him. He called me a bewhiskered roughneck. Nobody can call me that and escape a reckoning. If I ever catch him ashore I'll unbeautify him permanently—"

"Let him stay handsome," Dave advised. "His fatal beauty will be his undoing."

VI

A DAY came when my marvelous thinking apparatus convulsed like the mechanism of a slot machine, and a lovely idea dropped into the pan. Mrs. Hester was scouting for a juicy meal ticket. Whoever grabbed her on the assumption that she was a rich catch would make a record-breaking water haul. I desired to salvage Honk from anything bordering on such a misstep. And the commodore I classified as a pestilence and an abomination.

Very well, I had only to shuffle the cards, deal them adroitly from top and bottom, and lo! One would get this, another would get that—a bobtail flush here, a straight open at both ends there. And a pair of knaves would cop the pot.

I took Honk into my confidence part way.

"You know that cockeyed jackanapes they call the commodore, who roars all over the lake like a madman day and night," I ventured. "He's scared all the fish out of Swan Lake. Even the gars have quit biting—"

"Yeah?" said he indifferently. "But I'm not interested in fishing."

"Come, come," I insinuated. "You're a sportsman, aren't you? Surely. And a stanch believer in the square deal for man and beast. So I want you to do me a favor. Will you?"

"How can I say until I know what it is?" he parried. "What is it?"

"I've got an astute scheme all figured out," I said mysteriously. "I'm aiming to make that speed-boatman look like small change in Chinese counterfeit money. It's a lulu of a scheme, but I can't tell you the details for a week or ten days. Some other people are mixed up in it, see? So you'll have to trust me and do your part blindly. All you have to do is spread a rumor that Commodore Arthur Bowers is supposed to 've cleaned up a big bunch of dough on the stock market. Don't lie. I wouldn't have you put the smallest smudge on your white soul. Just hint around. Say a friend told you Bowers had sold short, or bought long, or something, and won a million, or five millions, or some such amount."

"Um," he deliberated. "It sounds harmless enough. Couldn't injure him in any way. It's no defamation of character or slanderous statement to intimate that a man has collared a fortune. You want me to scatter the word around. What else?"

"That's all," I told him, with the brevity of a lawyer dismissing a witness. "Just tell your friends—women particularly — and let nature take its course."

"You're a cunning gink," he said. "I've found out more than once that your seeming stupidity hides a fox's acumen. So I'll take it for granted that you're up to something clever. Just so it don't make me look like a wall-eyed ass—"

"It won't," I hastened to assure him. "If you appear in it at all you'll look like Sir Galahad disguised as King Solomon. But you'll not appear. Don't expect publicity."

"Okay," he approved. "And you'll let me hear the whole story later?"

"The whole thrilling plot, in full," I promised. He was satisfied.

VII

THERE was one more essential factor upon which the success of my plan depended. It wasn't quite enough to start a cock and bull rumor about the

sudden and opulent wealth of the Mad Mullah of Swan Lake. It was also necessary for some way to be devised whereby he could be prevented or dissuaded from spending all of his animate hours ricochetting from Hades to breakfast on the water. We had to get him still long enough to be wooed. Once more I toiled and spun, and conjured an idea out of the cosmic void. It was a noble fancy, egad. It was neither more nor less than to sow our end of the watery runway used by the commodore for his race course with floating mines.

The type of mine I finally agreed upon was a homemade affair, but highly efficient. In a spare moment I hoofed it to the settlement at Gypsum Junction, drifted into a hardware and seed store, and purchased a couple of balls of binder twine.

Having returned to my lair on the lake, I cut the twine into hundred-foot lengths, and stretched these segments along the shore line. At points a foot apart I tied on short sticks split from sturdy oak. The completed mine looked very much like a heroic tail of a kite. Dave Thorne rowed up in his boat in the cool of the evening, and assisted with these sinister devices. The commodore came scuttering past while we were preparing our defenses of war, making the usual spectacular turn around my private snag with a wild upheaval of loose water and noise. He evidently thought we were building trotlines, and amused himself by making derisive signs, wiggling his paws, pretending to comb imaginary hair and beard with his fingers, and grimacing like a hyena. I answered his signals with a few insulting pantomimic gestures of my own.

"Enjoy yourself!" I bellowed. "The last laugher is the boy that loses his vest buttons. It's a safe bet he'll come back, don't you think?" I said to Dave. "He'll likely figure on several more circles down here if he suspects we're setting out some night lines."

"Sure thing, Horace. He'll be back with bells on as soon as he thinks we've got our fishing tackle in the water. Your scheme ought to work, old hoss. It's feasible. If it does we're going to have a peck of fun. Has your side-kicker done his part spreading the glad tidings of Artie's wealth among the gossipers?"

"Oh, yes, he has scattered the news," I affirmed. "That part's jake."

"If we have luck and succeed in getting Bowers unhorsed for a week—or even a few days," Thorne mused, "I'll bank on Hester. And if she garners him, I'll owe you a lot, old scout. I'll sure square the bill, too, you'll see. If I get my talons on that trust fund I'll be in a position to do something—"

"Forget it, sonny," I retorted. "I'm an altruist. I ask nothing better than to do things to others. Do others as they would like to do you, and beat 'em to it. That's my motto."

We paddled out to the natural buoy in the gray gloaming and set our trap for Bowers. The floating snares were attached by one end to the snag. The lines of little sticks were then stretched out to lie almost submerged on the surface of the water in a sprangle of waiting pitfalls for our prospective quarry. After which we returned to the peaceful shore, brought stools, and sat down in the shadow of the pump shanty to wait.

But hark! A sound came to disturb our solitude. It was the sound of sputtering explosions, at first softened by distance, but swiftly becoming louder

and more distinct, like the rattle of rapid-firing guns. So-o! It was the enemy approaching in his leaping lupus. Pell-mell, headlong, shattering the tranquil vesper hour, a ruthless thing, bouncing from wave to wave in a fog of ear-splitting pandemonium. On he came, traveling his regular course, headed for his pivoting mark. We waited with bated breath.

Probably the ruffian was chortling to himself over his prankish stunt of scaring the fish into the neighboring trees, taking an impish satisfaction in his deviltry. He roared up, going thirty miles an hour or better, and rounded in a short turn to cut a hairpin whisk about the mark. And there was where things happened.

The visibility wasn't so good, but the audition was fine. Just play like you're listening to a tornado cavorting along battering and banging things in its path in a noisy, carefree way. All at once it bumps up against a tin shop full of kicking mules. At the same time you get a station sending the finish of the international motor cycle race, and also grab off a large crash of static. Great! You have the grand finale of Commodore Bowers in his demon speed sled when he struck the floating mines strewed by yours complacently assisted by David Thorne.

There was heard a rattling, ripping, crackling noise mixed with the harsh snarling and spitting of tigers fighting. All the noises in the world resounded, and then—silence. The soft "swoosh" of little lapping wavelets. Half a mile away we could distinguish a faint, wedge-shaped wake such as you see behind a swimming muskrat. The commodore was swimming his way to shore.

Dave had a clear idea of what took place. "When he tangled with the trap, his propeller clogged and was wrenched off. Then his engine ran wild and danced itself loose, finally smashing through the bottom of the boat. The good ship filled and sank. Commodore Bowers rescued himself by swimming one mile."

"Such is life," I said. "Nobody can call me an unshorn roughneck and escape the reckoning."

"In my mind's eye I can see future events," Dave mused. "Bowers will lope into the clubhouse and tell the terrible story of his mishap. He'll blubber about the loss of his beloved boat. Mrs. Hester will fly to his side and be his comforter. She'll coo over him, and fix his necktie, and pat him. In a few days she'll have him bewitched. He's already done for. Horace, my congratulations."

"Don't mention it," I replied modestly. "The pleasure is mine." I went inside to swing a couple of scoopfuls of bituminous.

VIII

THREE days elapsed. On the third or maybe the fourth evening Hancock Simpson bedecked himself like a glass of fashion and mold of form in his soup and fish, and lit out for a whirl with his society associates across the lake.

"I'm going to close the deal tonight, old chappie," he told me. "When I return it will all be settled. She will have named the day. But don't worry, Horace, I mean to take care of you. I'll see that you get a soft snap—"

"Oh, sure," I said, chuckling silently in my whiskers.

Dave Thorne dropped in on me shortly after Honk's departure. We conversed about this and that, and subsequently got up a game of pitch, two-

bits a corner. Only an hour had dribbled away when we both heard a sound of labored breathing. Some one was coming in short pants. Honk, red-faced with strong emotion, appeared in the pump-shanty door. He began to babble.

"Speak out," I snorted. "What's happened? Talk turkey."

"Mrs. Thorne is married!" he gurgled.

His statement was the cue for an emotional demonstration from Dave Thorne.

"Hip, hip!" yelped that devoted relative by marriage to the bride. "Hot pazazzas! That's cheery news. Well, so long, Horace. I've got to catch a train for New York—no time to lose. I've got some plans to get started. You'll hear from me in the near future—"

"Don't Worry, Horace, I Mean to Take Care of You"

"Horace," he said wheezily, "I—I got there too late. I lost her, my soul's chosen mate, my dream woman. And with her went a fortune. A million, two, three, six millions. I can't say exactly how much. But it's all phooey as far as it affects me—"

Honk continued his maudlin monologue.

"They were married in the parsonage of a preacher at the Junction at

four o'clock. The wedding was quite quiet. At five o'clock they left for the East in His Nibs's special—"

"Special?" Dave Thorne stopped at the door, knocked stiff. "Special? Bow-wow Bowers riding on a special. What kind of guff is that?"

"Bow-wow Bow-wowers?" stuttered Honk. "I didn't mention him. What's he got to do with it? Mrs. Thorne didn't marry Commodore Bowers. He's married already. Rumor says he was estranged from his wife because of his mania for speedboating. But now his boat's sunk, they're going to be reconciled. Mrs. Thorne married Bolivar P. Whagg, chairman of the board of the Transcontinental System. 'Tis said he's the chief stockholder. He's worth about two hundred millions. They've been engaged practically ever since her latest husband died—she's a swift worker—"

Dave grunted and disappeared.

"Who is that jasper?" Honk asked. "I've noticed him prowling around. Why do you associate with these low-browed hicks, Horace? You don't gain anything by it."

"Who is that jasper?" I echoed, prepared to give him a blow.

"That's one David Thorne, only son and heir of Matthew Thorne, deceased. Your ex-dream woman is his stepmother. By getting married she loses her rights in the estate. She never had anything but the income off a trust fund. Dave gets the whole works now. Stocks, bonds, house up the Hudson, everything. He's well heeled. And I'm his pal. He's going to take care of me, all right. I helped him put over a big scheme—"

"Jeepers, Horace! If I'd caught the widow I'd 've hooked a dead fish, eh? Jove, I had a narrow shave, didn't I? Phew! It makes me feel faint. So you helped young Thorne out, did you? What did you do? You also promised to tell me the rest about Bow—"

I cogitated. What had I done? I'd blown up Bowers's cursed boat. And thereby effected a reconciliation in his family. And also made Swan Lake safe for fishing. What else? Bah! Nothing much else. "Scat!" I said gruffly. "Scat! Your tail's afire!"

He scatted.

THE END

We Want You to Tell Us of

Ex-Rails Who Have Made Good

DO you know some man who has made the grade, and who got his start on the railroad? Men like Walter Chrysler, Thomas A. Edison, who are now successful in some other endeavor? We want a photograph and two hundred words of copy on these personalities, and we will pay you well for your efforts. You don't have to be a writer to do this job for us.

Send in Your Material Now

I Slid Over the Steel Top of the Cab

Rolling Wheels

Bob Dorset, Master Mechanic, Pronounces Doom for the Boomer in a Subtle Threat

By Don Waters

Illustrated by M. Burs

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

THE Boomer (who is telling the story) is recording the swift events of his life while waiting for death to strike him. He started out as an apprentice machinist in Chicago, served his time and became involved in a strike in the nineties. He struck out to the South to escape the blackball which had been placed on him, and which prevented him from holding a job more than a few days.

He was arrested in Kentucky as a hobo, assaulted the officer and made his escape. Then, after miles of dangerous traveling, with the law on his trail, he found a roundhouse job in the Carolinas on the mountain division of a railroad where he settled. He developed a device that would save money in engine operation, only to have it stolen from him by his foreman, Bob Dorset, who was made master mechanic. Dorset promoted the Boomer to the roundhouse foremanship to forestall any later complaints the Boomer might have about the

theft of the device. About this time the Boomer met Mary Henderson, daughter of the superintendent, and he had a chance to do Mr. Henderson a service by giving Mary's brother a particular job at the shops. The son padded the pay roll, but the Boomer covered the thefts by showing a diverting of the money to another channel in the shop work, to save the Hendersons embarrassment.

CHAPTER VIII

IT was pretty certain the auditor saw through my pretense of not understanding what he was driving at. After leaving him, passing through the yards, I noticed an engine coming up the hill toward me, hauling one coach. I stopped till it came abreast, and saw it was the master mechanic's private car. That renewed all my bitterness, for it brought back to me the way he and Murphy had gone around me on the packing idea. In no pleasant frame of mind, I got back to my office.

The longer I sat thinking, the more angry I became. When a half hour later, a call boy informed me that the master mechanic wanted to see me over at his car, I was ripe for trouble. And it came quick. As soon as I entered, I saw that he was all set to jack me up. I held my temper while he told me that the auditor had made his report, and that I was accused of diverting labor to my own ends without the proper authority.

It flashed over me at once what Dorset was up to. He was trying to put me in a hole, get me under obligation to him so that I would keep quiet about anything else that might turn up between us. The auditor knew why I lied, and, without a doubt, had told Dorset. In spite of all his high airs, I could see that he was feeling his way like a man walking in the dark, ready to switch at any time, lay his hand on my shoulder and say, "That's all right, my boy. I understand, and I'll keep quiet about it."

Then I lit into him. I got him told in quick, short words. I called him a damn' crook, told him how I had discovered he had stolen my idea. I'll give it to Bob Dorset. He was no coward. He hadn't fought his way up to M. M. by taking two for one from anybody. He jumped up from his chair, made a pass at me. I dodged it, and connected a nice right swing flush on the end of his nose. And then we had it.

I was tough as rawhide. It had only been a few months since I had been swinging a sixteen-pound sledge and juggling rod brasses and cylinder heads. And he was soft. He'd been sitting around in an armchair, smoking good cigars and drinking fine wines. So I trimmed him, but not easily. As it was, he hung a shiner on one of my eyes, and clipped me a jab in the ribs that I can sometimes feel to this day.

The negro porters jumped in. I crowned one with a chair, kicked the other on the shins, and put them out of the fight. That nifty private car was a complete wreck when we got through, and that was not till I had slipped over a full arm swing that connected with the point of Dorset's jaw.

As I went out of the coach I could feel my eye swelling up, and I was pretty savage when I got to the coaling track. I lit into young Henderson, and told him what I thought of him. He gave me some slack. So I fired him then and there, and booted him out the gate and off the company property for good measure.

Of course I regretted my abrupt actions, but regrets came too late. It was the middle of the afternoon before I had finally decided that I was finished here, whether I wanted to be or not. I felt sure that George would inform his family of the summary way in which I had fired him, and the superintendent would use his influence to get me off the division. And Dorset, the M. M., would readily agree to my discharge. He'd be glad to set the air on me. I felt curious as to why he had not already done so.

But I didn't care about them or the job. Jobs were plentiful, a good machinist had no trouble in finding work. What worried me most was Mary. How would she take it? What would she say? Well, anyway, I came to the conclusion that the mountain division would soon have a new general shop foreman. I'd beat them to it. I wrote out my resignation and sent it over to the M. M.'s private car by my clerk.

I waited for his return, and he came back grinning.

"What did he say?" was my first question.

And I heard. It seems the clerk had come on the M. M. sitting holding a piece of beefsteak over a nicely colored eye. Out of the other he read my resignation, tore it up and sent back word:

"If that guy thinks he's a going to get out that easy, he's mistaken. Tell him I'm not done with him yet. His resignation is not accepted. Tell him if he's got the nerve I think he has, he'll stick around and see what I do to him."

So I sent back my reply:

"The switches are all lined toward the shop office. Pull your freight over here whenever you get up steam. I've only made a few minor adjustments on you; next time I'll give you a class five overhaul."

After that I couldn't leave without showing yellow. But I wondered what Bob Dorset had up his sleeve to pull on me, and I found out later. I knew I'd made a bitter enemy then. Of course, the only reason he didn't fire me then was because he knew as long as I was shop foreman, he had some say over me. But once I quit the job, he was afraid I'd go over his head to some of the higher officials and put them next to the fact that he was using his position to further his own ends and make money out of the company. I'm not saying that the company did not get their money's worth, for that metallic packing was certainly a time saver, and regardless of what they paid Dorset for it in reason, it was worth it.

Just before quitting time I was handed another surprise. A negro boy brought me a note from Mary. She wanted to see me that night. Something important. Would I come? I surveyed myself in the mirror on the wall behind my desk. I was no pretty sight. What an eye! But I well knew it would be a week at least before it became normal, and I couldn't stay away from her for a week.

I answered it, promising to be up that night, a promise I never kept through no fault of mine. Inside of five minutes after I had sent that note to her, a boy brought a message to me. No. 12, the afternoon passenger train, was blocking the main line at Forty Mile Hill with her engine out of commission. The message asked for a machinist and key.

I didn't puzzle over that long. I remembered that engine 127 was on No. 12, and I rightly figured that she was on one side since I had seen one of the machinists setting her valves that

morning. I had stopped to say something to him, and smelled the stench of whisky strong on his breath. I bet myself that he had not keyed one of the valve rods properly, the key had worked out, and of course the engine would not negotiate the grade on one side.

It was pay day, the day shift had left, the night gang were not yet down, and in all likelihood would not be to work on time that night. It was up to me. I got in touch with the call office, ordered out a crew, and in a half hour I was riding a light engine out to Forty Mile Hill on the main line. After we got there it took me but a quarter of an hour to get the 127 repaired. Then I thought of Mary. In a fine frenzy, I got back in the engine, begged the hoghead to pull her tail, lay the throttle lever back over the coal boards, and roll her into town.

But all my plans for a hurried run back went awash. We stopped at the first telegraph cabin for orders, and got them, a wait for a freight. And we waited. It was almost midnight when the freight pulled by our siding. They had a heavy load behind them, and a heavy tale of grief to relate. They'd snatched out two drawbars on the hill, they had to set out a box car with a broken flange and they had got off the rails in the siding when they set off the defective car. A mournful wail they put up, yet I was feeling about as mournful myself when, at two o'clock in the morning, I made my way over to my boarding house.

Next morning I sent Mary a note, explaining my absence. I waited all day for a reply that did not come. Of course, I felt done at the turn of events. I was pretty sure that George had carried a fine tale of woe home, and had put me in bad standing with his family. Events that transpired in the next few weeks strengthened that thought into a certainty. The superintendent, whom I met quite often, either casually around the yards or on business, had lost his old cordiality. He was painfully polite to me, but as distant as Greenland's icy mountains. Several times I caught him surreptitiously surveying me out of the corner of his eye as though he were trying to figure me out. I couldn't discuss with him what I knew he was thinking about; I didn't want to hurt the old man, and I couldn't leave. I'd called Dorset's bluff, and by so doing I'd pinned myself to the job.

CHAPTER IX

SINCE the job was all I had left to me now, I threw my whole strength into it. I soon realized that if I wanted to produce, I must have the men behind me whom I could depend on. After some pondering, I hit on an idea. I got a pass, laid off and went up to Chicago and got in touch with some of the nut splitters I knew there.

I hardly recognized the place where I had served my time. They'd had a lot of new motive power around, big Baldwins that made our little jacks look like children's toys. They'd enlarged the shops, got in new tools, and were shoving out the work at a rapid clip. They'd made many improvements in everything but the working conditions. When I saw some of the men I used to work with, and quietly tipped them an offer to go to work for me, they jumped at the chance.

It was the middle of February, snow lay thick on the ground outside, big icicles hung pendent from the eaves of all the shop buildings. A raw, cold northeaster blew off Lake Michigan,

a wind that seemed to drive right through the clothes and chill the very marrow in a man's bones. When I told these fellows that we never had over a month or six weeks of winter, they could scarcely believe me, and that night, in the back of a saloon on Forty-Ninth and State Streets, I induced a half dozen to promise to come down. I agreed to get transportation for them, and if they stuck six months, to refund the freight on their household goods, for they were all industrious, steady-going married men.

I figured that I could get the freight agent to give them back the money they spent for a car to carry their household belongings, and if I couldn't do that, I intended to pay their freight bills out of my own pocket. I had a tidy little sum in the bank. I was getting good wages and spending very little money. Since I had quit going up to see Mary, I used to put in all my time around the shops.

Old Gordie MacPherson came down first. I put him to work. He was a good mechanic, reliable, steady going and dependable—a man who never would allow himself to slight a job. He stayed a month, went back and brought his family down. The MacPhersons now own a hundred acres of the finest land around there, and Gordie's son is a shop foreman, holding my old job. MacPherson brought a couple more machinists with him. I eased out a few of the drunks I had on the pay roll, and things picked up. Many a job we used to send to the big shops for class five repairs, we now did ourselves. Inside of three months I had seven first-class mechanics down from Chicago.

Once I remember writing Dorset for a cylinder casting for the 86. He wired back: "What do you intend to do with it? Set it up for a monument?"

I wired back: "Yes, a moving monument for you to gaze on and wonder."

He sent it on. He intended to show me up, for he shipped a rough casting. And believe me, there is some machine work to do on one of those. We pulled the cracked block off the old 86, put on the new casting, bored out the cylinders, faced the valves, drilled bolt and stud holes, and fitted it on. It took us two weeks, but we finally completed the job.

The day we got it finished I received a message from the master mechanic: "How much longer is Engine Eighty-Six going to be held up for repairs?"

I wired back: "86 is now out on a run."

I was pretty busy those days, my mind occupied with keeping the motive power in operation and preventing terminal and road delays. Yet often during a breathing spell two things entered my mind. What did Dorset plan in regard to evening the score with me?

And Mary. One night I made up my mind to relieve the suspense regarding her. I dressed up, went uptown and walked along the darkened street toward the big white home of the Hendersons. As I turned in the pathway between the lines of boxwoods, I noticed a spanking team standing in the carriage entrance beside the house. Something warned me to stop. It was well for my self-respect that I did. For Mary came down the steps toward the carriage, a man beside her. By the light streaming out of the window I recognized him. It was Bob Dorset. He must have come in after I had left the yards.

I watched him assist her into the

rig. The crunch of gravel sounded, and they drove out past where I stood disconsolate in the darkness. A half hour later, when I passed the opera house, I heard the strains of music from inside, and saw their carriage at the curb. At that time I thought Dorset had planned to go with Mary out of spite toward me. I don't think so now. No man needed any other incentive to be in her company but her own alluring personality.

If I had dug into my job before, I hit the ball harder now. For my job seemed all I had left to interest me. Several times I sat biting my lips, watching the wheels of a freight passing by through the yards, those bright treads rolling the steel away from them.

As I look back on it now I can see that there was little between me and escape but my jealousy of Dorset. He made no move. In fact, once, a month or two after I had had my run in with him, he met me crossing the yards. He held out his hand, greeted me cordially, and talked casually of minor happenings. Never once did he even suggest that we had ever had a difference; neither by word nor sign did he show that he held the slightest grudge. I couldn't help admiring him for the way he carried off what might have been a very embarrassing situation.

The thought even entered my mind that he had decided to forget the past and start a new deal. Well he might. Things were all his way. He had a fine job; his social position was established. He was making money fast. He'd soon be a rich man. While I—well, I was being pushed to the limit of human endurance. The old order was changing. I'd got onto the job during its transition period. The cordwood burners were just behind; the Mallets and superheaters were just ahead.

In six months the tonnage handled on our division increased by a hundred per cent. The South had begun to wake up. Our section was changing from an agricultural to a manufacturing country. Along our division, even then, they were building a half dozen big cotton mills. The mines of Tennessee were getting into production. There was talk of a new coaling yard to be constructed down at tidewater. An enormous pulp mill began to take shape out on one of our branch lines. It was well for me, I guess, that things around the shop kept my mind occupied. Several times I had seen Mary pass the depot in company with Dorset of an evening as I came back from my meal toward the shop.

Once I stood on the curb not five feet away from her as she passed. Her head was held high, she bowed stiffly to me as I raised my hat—stiffly and coldly, a curt little nod. Yet my heart beat a bit faster at the flood of color that swept over her face, and I saw the film of tears which came into her eyes.

I knew then that things were not as they seemed, and if I could not put Mary from my thoughts, neither had she forgotten me. Small consolation, that, but better than none.

CHAPTER X

THERE was plenty to keep me busy, and I couldn't sit mooning like a lovesick youth. The shop mechanics on the road organized. It was with a feeling of dread that I heard that they were going up before the company officials for their first contract.

Passing by the back end of an engine

one day, I overheard a couple of men talking.

"We'll get our rights or we'll pull a strike and tie them up."

A cold hand clutched my heart. I knew what to expect if they went on strike. I'd been through it all. They hadn't.

One day a committee called on me—strangers, union officials who were making the rounds of the road. They explained that they were the general grievance committee, and wanted to talk over several things with me. In the first place, they asked me how I stood on the union. In reply I took out my wallet, unwrapped my old Knights of Labor card, pointed to a hole through it.

"That hole," I said, "was made by a soldier's bullet one night at Sixty-Third Street in Chicago, just before the engine on the Denver Limited laid down."

They passed the card around. The spokesman arose. There was a note of admiration in his voice: "Then you were one of the Prairie wreckers?"

I nodded.

They filed out of the office, and I never had a bit of trouble with the union all during the troubled period that followed. They knew where my sympathies lay, and although at almost every other shop there were bickerings and contentions and minor strikes, I had none of that to contend with. I am sure that the men whom I had induced to come down from Chicago had told the rest of the shop force what I had been through. I was running a pretty big outfit now. Twoscore machinists, a half dozen boilermakers, pipe fitters, electricians, air brake men, and our roustabout and labor gangs totaled almost two hundred men. I learned that they had a saying on the mountain division that if a man did his work I'd let him get away with blue murder. Which was just as well.

The dawn of an era of organization was on us. The company had more sense than some of the Northern roads, for it did not oppose the union. Live and let live was its motto, and things went along smoothly on the mountain division. That is, from a personal standpoint. Mechanically, it was a far different tale.

We had to handle the increased tonnage, and had little enough to do it with. Our equipment was inadequate, our motive power was but fifty per cent sufficient, our coaling facilities were terrible, and our little hundred class engines were worked to death. We took to chain ganging them, first in, first out, and we worked at high pressure. I remember once an engine got in at 11 o'clock. We pulled her fire, blew her down, washed her boiler, put in new main rod brasses and a couple of grate bars, and she was coupled onto a train ready to go out at 2.30. Of course she went down the yard with a blower in her stack, and a switch engine furnishing the steam and hauling her to her train. Yet when the yard engine uncoupled after pushing her out, she had steam enough up to move along under her own power.

Then we got some eight hundreds in. Fine big engines they were to us then; 2-6-2's, that carried a hundred and seventy-five pounds boiler pressure and had a fair turn of speed as well as an enormous drawbar pull. I'll never forget the day when we started out the first thousand ton train that had ever rolled a wheel over the mountain division. I thought our fight to furnish sufficient motive power was done when the compounds arrived. But it had only started. Business was on the

boom. We were handling sixty trains every twenty-four hours now, and each month saw the tonnage increase.

The shop forces caught the brunt of this heavy traffic, yet the roadway and the transportation departments had their increasing troubles, too. It seems rather a joke, now, to call forty cars of coal a long train, but it was no joke then. Part way down our division into the rolling hills of the cotton country, there was a bad grade, six miles of steep, sharp curves, of high fills and deep cuts—Salt Lick Hill.

Sitting up in the cab of the 800, I rode out with the first long freight that had ever rolled a wheel on the mountain division. The 800 buckled down to her work in grand shape.

Wham! wham! wham! The exhaust exploded out the stack as we passed the yard office. At the yard limit board, Smith, the hoghead, hooked her up a couple of notches, closed the intercepting valve. She steadily gained momentum, and passing through Hickory Nut Gap, five miles out, the 800 led her string along at a thirty mile clip.

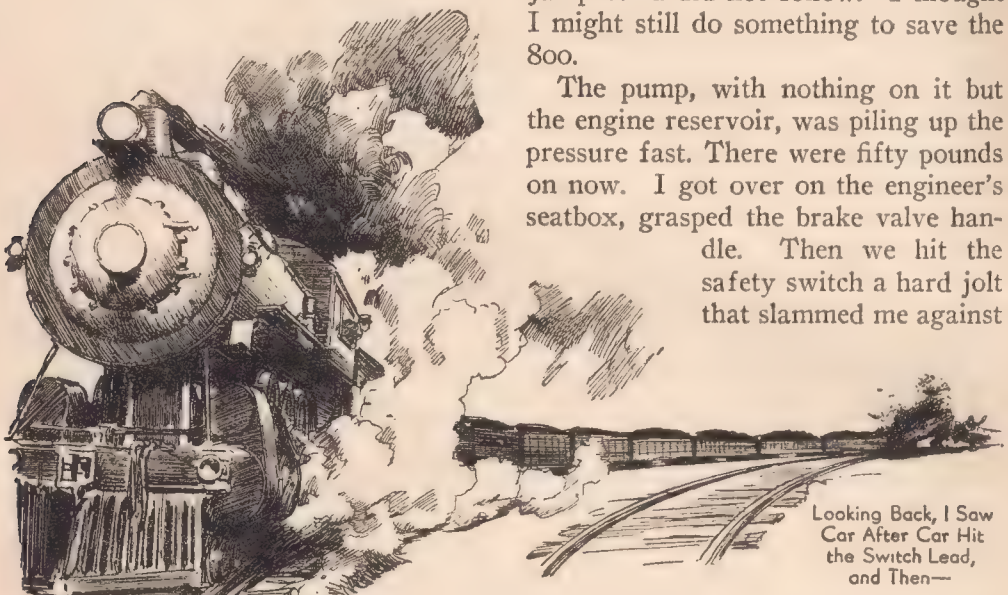
She had the speed all right in her little five-foot driving wheels; she had the power in her big cylinders. Fifty miles from the terminal we came to Salt Lick Mountain, and its hard grade that extended for six miles down the hill. There had been many wrecks on Salt Lick, and the company expected them. They had built three safety tracks, spurs off the main line which swung around and up the side of the mountain. If a train got out of control, the switchman stationed at each safety track would send it up the hill where the steep up grade would soon pull it to a halt. Or rather these safeties were always set closed and a hoghead coming down had to signal with his whistle that all was well in order to get lined up straight ahead on the main line.

We stopped at Valley View at the top of Salt Lick Hill. The car inspectors went over our brake rigging, put on a couple of shoes, took up piston travel on a few cars. The conductor highballed us ahead. We started down the grade. I stood up on the fireman's seatbox, looked back over our string, saw a couple of brakemen twisting the wheels with their brake sticks. At a fifteen-mile pace, with the shrieking whine of cast iron shoe biting at case-hardened wheel tread, we rounded a curve and rolled over a trestle toward No. 1 safety track. To the imperative blare of the whistle, as old Bud Smith jerked the cord, I saw the switchman come out of his shanty, throw the switch, line us ahead. We rattled past the control shanty over a level stretch of track at a good clip and swung onto the steep grade below it. I could see that we were gaining speed, but thought little of it. We were running quite fast at No. 2 safety track.

As yet there didn't seem to me to be any danger, not till I looked at the air gauge. Our train line pressure was down to twenty pounds. A hose had let loose somewhere back along the train, and with straight air equipment, this didn't put the brakes on us. The pump was beating frantically, but the pressure slid on down till the hand barely vibrated against the pin. I leaned out of the window and looked back in time to see the two extra brakemen unload.

We whipped around a curve. The crummy came into sight. The flagman stood on the back platform, balanced on his toes, looking for a soft place to land. He did the bird act into a pile of brush. The conductor fol-

lowed. We certainly were running away now. The fireman turned a frightened face to me. I ordered him to unload while he could. A glance ahead showed me the switch shanty man at No. 3 safety doing a skirt dance on the little platform in front of his shack, waving a red flag in futile stop signals.



Looking Back, I Saw Car After Car Hit the Switch Lead, and Then—

The fireman had leaped far out. I saw him land in a thicket of briers, get up, rub his head. I was thankful he hadn't got hurt. Bud Smith sat on his seatbox, wringing his useless brake valve back and forth. He was game, though. Once he reached for the Johnson bar. I yelled at him to stop.

"I'll get it!" I shrieked above the rumbling clatter of our progress.

I swung up on the coal boards, over the coal, down to the bumper beam on the back of the tank. I kicked the angle cock on the train line shut, crawled back into the cab.

"Go on, Bud!" I yelled. "Unload! You can't do anything!"

But he was reluctant to leave. Not until I got into the left-hand gangway did he step down, stand poised on the opposite side for a minute. Then he jumped. I did not follow. I thought I might still do something to save the 800.

The pump, with nothing on it but the engine reservoir, was piling up the pressure fast. There were fifty pounds on now. I got over on the engineer's seatbox, grasped the brake valve handle. Then we hit the safety switch a hard jolt that slammed me against the corner post of the cab. The drivers lifted, settled with a clang!

I rushed over to the fireman's side, and, looking back, I saw car after car bend around the switch lead. As each struck, they jumped, slewed, flung a few thousand pounds of coal spraying, and then settled down for a moment before their leaping, side swaying rush up the safety behind the 800. One, two, three, four, five, I counted them, hit the switch. Then one caught on the wrong roll. Up, up came one side, down went the other. The front end struck the ground, the back end reared up into the air. A black shower of coal flung far out over the right of way. I laughed at the switchman holding his hat in one hand, his red flag in the other, running fast down the main line away from the destruction.

I thought it would be an easy matter for me to set the air, bring the 800 to a stop. I gave her an application that had no more effect on her speed than if I had held a twig against those fast rolling drivers. I leaned out of the window. The drivers were locked, the 800 was sliding, pushed along by the momentum of half a thousand tons of dead weight behind her.

But the drag of the sliding drivers and tank wheels was beginning to make itself felt. The blur of the near timber slipping past slowed down; individual trees stood out. I'd done my part. A glance ahead and my heart missed a beat. The end of the safety track showed not a hundred yards in front. I looked for a brief second at that pile of cross-ties blocking the rails. Then I went over the coal boards, across the coal, and wrapped myself around the brake wheel on the back of the tender.

We hit hard. The back end of the tank flopped upwards; I was torn loose from my hold, flung ahead. I slid over the steel top of the cab, bounced off the sand dome, side swiped the stack, sailed like a flying squirrel through the air and—a loud crash filled my ears, a bright glitter of light swept across my eyes, thunder and lightning, all in one swift, pain-shot, stabbing instant, and then the darkness closed over me.

CHAPTER XI

My first concern when I came to was the 800. We needed her badly. If she had been smashed up, it would seriously cripple the division, for even one engine out of commission for any length of time meant a lot to us then. The yards were blocked with strings of cars waiting to be moved. Deliveries were weeks late; the shippers were making an awful howl; a couple of cotton mills on our division were working but three days a week on account of a shortage of coal.

We were not allowing the engines to stand idle, burning coal with banked fires. As fast as one got in, we got right after her and shoved her out on a run again. I was counting on the 800's to relieve our overworked shop force, and I certainly did not want the first one out on a run to be torn up. That was only part of it.

I have what every railroad gets sooner or later; I have the feeling that a locomotive is far more than a mere machine. It's a means to an end, and that end is to move the goods and passengers of this vast and growing country of ours. Those loaded cars of coal behind us were not merely black diamonds to me, but were potential energy needed to revolve the looms of the cotton mills, to furnish the power that ground up the spruce-pine logs into pulp wood, to make steam for the tannic acid of the tanneries; that coal was the vital force behind the industries along our division. It was up to me to furnish the motive power to deliver it. I was counting on the 800's to do it.

I tried to raise myself up. A sharp pain hit me under the heart. My left arm was held tight against my body. My left leg was stiff as a board from the hip down.

"Never mind about the 800. You just lie quiet." It was a feminine voice that answered my query.

I opened my eyes. Then I knew I was in the hospital. I must have been knocked cold, and had just come to my senses. How long I had been out I had no idea. Raising my free right arm, I felt my left shoulder. A criss-cross of bandages met my fingers.

"What happened?" I asked, looking at the nurse in white uniform who stood over me.

"You'll hear later, but you mustn't get excited now. Drink this." She held a glass for me. I drank, lay back and fell asleep again.

Time passed. I discovered that I had three fractured ribs under my heart, a dislocated left shoulder, and a broken left leg.

I discovered something else. The bunch at the shops were honestly solicitous about my condition. Practically every man there was up to see me as soon as visitors were allowed. They brought me all the gossip from the shops, and there was at least one of them with me most of my waking hours. From my gang I learned that the 800 had been hurt very little, her pilot was smashed, the brake rigging torn off and the cylinder head covers cracked. They had her out on a run the next day.

It was not until two weeks after visitors were allowed that the superintendent came to see me. All the dispatchers, the trainmaster, even the superintendent's chief clerk, had visited me before then. It made me feel pretty sheepish when those fellows came, and I could feel the real concern in their expressions as they sat and talked to me. I made a vow then that when I got out and back at work again, I'd be a little bit more considerate of their feelings than I had been in the past, and I promised myself that when a dispatcher or the trainmaster called for an engine, I'd not consign him a hoppin', with his back broken in three places, to the country where the fire always burned with the blowers on.

When the superintendent finally did come, he was properly solicitous about my welfare, and asked if everything possible was being done for me. He didn't stay long, and I wasn't sorry when he left.

Once Bob Dorset called on me. I was in quite a bit of pain that day, and rather grumpy with him. He didn't stay long, either. But of these two visitors, in spite of the fact that I had no love for Dorset, he left the impression with me of being genuinely sorry I had been hurt. When he shook hands with me, there was a sincere feel to his grip, and a ring to his voice which made me wish that things had been different. I couldn't help but wish that that hard-hitting son-of-a-gun was a friend of mine.

I've forgotten many of the incidents of my stay in the hospital. But one made quite an impression on me. Each morning just after I awoke, a big bunch of roses with the dew still fresh on them was sent up to my room. There was no name on them, and all the information I could gather from the nurse was that a negro boy rode up to the hospital each morning with them on a bicycle.

When I got to convalescing, hobbling around on a crutch, I watched for him. One morning I caught him as he came into the building, holding his big bunch of roses. I asked him who sent them.

"Cap'n, she done tole me not to say nuthin' to nobody."

A dollar loosened his tongue.

"Miss Mary, suh. Don' yo' tell, 'caise de cunnel will like to be put out wid her, come he knows what she's bin a doin'."

That was worth far more than the extra dollar I gave him, and, as he left, in a whisper, he added the startling piece of news: "Miss Mary's done bin a weepin' a heap o' a mawnin', suh, since I done started to come up heah."

"Weeping? Why?" I asked.

"'Caise de cunnel done forbid her to come see yo'."

The dull ache in my shoulder was forgotten for the rest of the day. The sharp darts of pain that drove around my heart were easier to bear. Even the heavy plaster cast that weighed down my leg seemed lighter after that. Perhaps the news the darky and I pledged each other to keep secret helped as much as the doctor and his medicines, for I was out in a month—out again with stern admonitions to take things easy or my chances for getting into a wooden overcoat would become very promising. Of course I agreed to live a quiet, settled existence, and really intended to. My heart was affected, they said, by the jolt I'd got. It must have been the top of a marker light that pounded me over the heart, for the black and blue circle was a long time in disappearing.

A quiet, settled life. I have to grin, now, when I think of it. On a crutch I left the hospital, glad to get away from it, faithfully promising that I'd report back there every day till I was discharged from the doctor's care. It was strictly against his orders to take any active part in railroading for some time. He'd warned me to lie around and let the time pass. That was a hard thing for me to do. It still is hard, but it was impossible for me to take things easy when I knew that the shops were all balled up. I could tell almost every engine on the division by the sound of her whistle and the cough of her exhaust. The first night I lay in bed at my boarding house, close to the railroad, I checked the trains leaving the yards.

No. 71 was three-quarters of an hour behind her regular leaving time getting out. No. 83, a hot shot, was twenty-five minutes behind her schedule when she blew for the crossover at the junction. The midnight passenger left thirteen minutes late, and you could dance a jig to the shuffle of her exhaust, her valves were out so bad.

Next morning at seven o'clock I hobbled across the yards and showed up at the shops and found a slack wad in charge.

"How's she a going?" I asked him.

"Oh, great balls of fire!" he wailed. "I wish I'd never got into this."

"What's up?" I queried.

He had orders for three trains to run in the next hour, and not an engine ready. So I took hold. A westbound freight just coming through the yards gave me an engine. I doubled her back without cleaning the fire or even filling the grease cups. A double-header, both engines ready and called for three hours later, gave me motive power for the second, and by the use of about twenty gallons of kerosene and a half a cord of rich pine wood, I got the third out. Of course I had to write a nice long letter afterward and explain to the supply department what became of the two dozen bumper beams they sent me. And of course I didn't tell them they went to build a hurried fire in an engine which was called and cold.

When I went through the roundhouse, I saw things there that certainly did not calm my nerves. Two of our new compounds were out of commission. One had a broken pump cylinder, the other a cracked main rod. Back in the office, I discovered that these two engines had been laid up for three days and no parts yet ordered. I blew up, lit into the fellow who had been in charge. He made some sort of a half baked excuse about being too busy to 'tend to ordering stuff for the

shop. When I got through telling him my opinion of him, he lit a rag for the train back to Knoxville.

Rather hot under the collar, I started across the yards to the dispatcher's office to send a rush message for the needed parts. Halfway across, I stopped while a freight pulled past. On the head end were two brand new eight hundreds deadheading. I knew they were probably consigned for the Piedmont Division below us. Their cabs were boarded up, their main rods up on the running boards. I never sent that message. Instead, I hurried back to the shops. I hunted up old Gordie MacPherson, handed him a five-dollar bill and gave him his instructions.

After dark that night, with a couple of my men helping me, they pushed a dump car down through the yards. I couldn't walk that far, so I rode on the dump and superintended the job. We uncoupled a pump off one engine, bolted our defective pump in its place, slid a main rod down from the running board and pushed a cracked rod up instead. The two deadhead engines went out at midnight, and the two engine watchmen on them were deadheads, too. They didn't know whether they rode an engine cab or a Roman chariot. Gordie had performed his congenial job well.

He came to work in the morning, and confidentially informed me that he still had two left of the five dollars. When I laughingly told him he should give that back, he demurred, saying that at any time another such occasion might arise and he'd have the money "aw safe and sound," to supply the liquid refreshment.

I know now it wasn't very ethical to unload my troubles on some other overworked, harried shop foreman, but railroads were not run on strictly ethical lines those days, and I never did railroad by the book of rules. The man, then, who was most adept at passing the buck, was the one who got along best. Let the other fellow worry, were my sentiments next morning when our two big jacks blared their way out through the yards with long strings of cars behind them. I never heard a thing about our little exchange, so I guess it passed off all right, and the engine builders got the blame.

It took me two weeks to get things organized. I recall now how I used to get down to work at daybreak and not leave the roundhouse till after midnight, washing up at noon and going up to see the doctor, begging him each day to allow me to go back to work. But I got results. Gradually the blocked yards cleared. Little by little we got ahead of the insistent demand of the trainmaster for motive power, and inside of a month or so I had time to think of other things besides my pressing job.

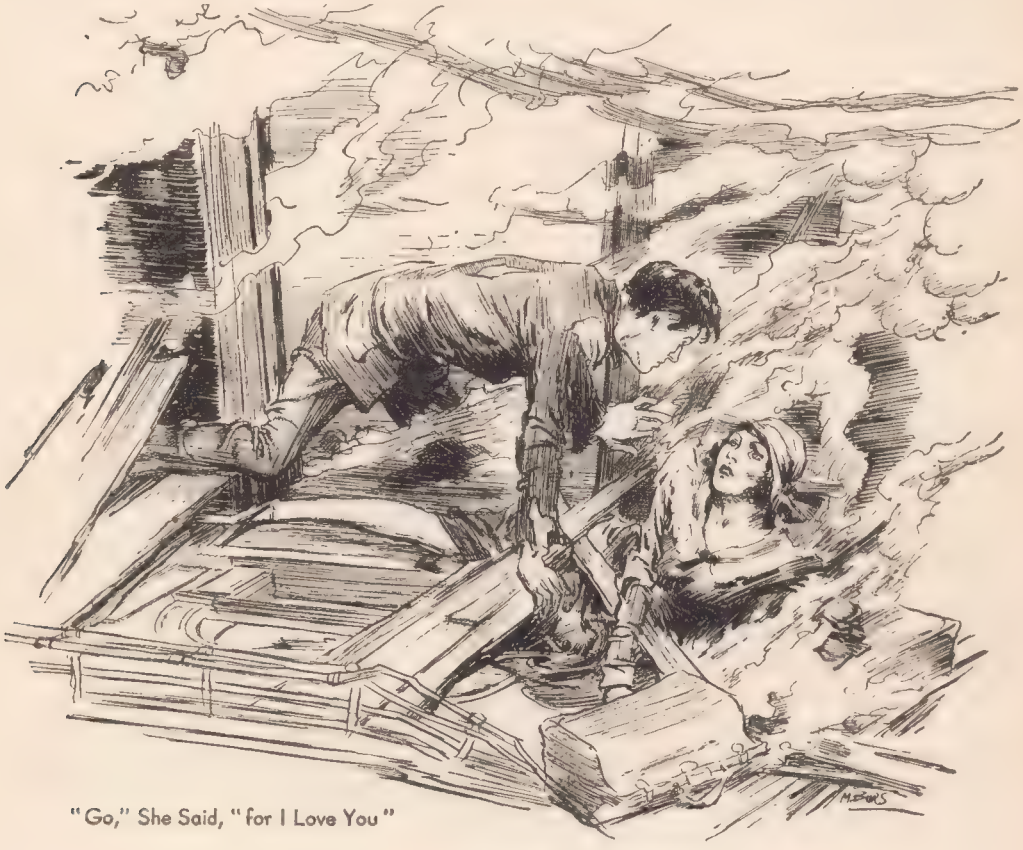
CHAPTER XII

Time to think of other things. I began to plan how to see Mary, to talk it over with her. During the long days of idleness in the hospital, when I had nothing else to think about, I figured out how our affair stood. The Hendersons were one of the first families of that section of the mountain country, and were proud of it. Their ancestors had come over from England centuries before, on a grant from King George. They had numbered among their members since, lawyers and doctors, men of affairs, and their women were noted for beauty and intelligence all through the Carolinas.

To them I was but a nobody—a damn' Yankee—full of Yankee tricks

and push. The superintendent knew my value around the railroad, and appreciated it, but when it came to meeting me as a social equal with intentions toward his daughter, that was a far

That chance came sooner than I expected. I had been out of the hospital about six weeks. They had taken the cast off of my leg and I was able to walk haltingly with a limp, but that



"Go," She Said, "for I Love You"

different affair. For me to know that George Henderson was a rogue and a worthless character, for them to be under obligations to me for shouldering the blame that he should have taken, must have been as wormwood and gall to his father. Without a doubt, after the coaling episode, her father had forbidden Mary to see me. And I knew her well enough to know that she would obey her father's wishes. But there was no string on me. I'd see her first chance, and when I did—

was far better than being bothered with a crutch. I'd even discarded my cane, and my leg was getting better each day, when, one evening just at sundown, I crossed the yards toward the depot on the way to supper. I ate no supper that night, for, as I climbed between the coaches of No. 26, our passenger train which left just before sundown, I saw Mary Henderson coming through the station gate. George and her father were on either side, carrying her bags.

For a few moments my nerve failed

me. I was afraid they were heading right for the coach where I then stood. But with a great relief I saw them go toward the rear of the train, and just before leaving time the two men walked back. I knew then Mary was riding No. 26 that night, and I also knew that here was my chance to straighten things out with her. After 26 got under way, I walked back through the coaches and stood on the platform, looking in through the glass in the end window. There were not many passengers. Mary sat halfway back in the car. Old Diamond Jack Moore, the conductor, sat beside her, chinning away at a rapid rate like a rabbit chewing cabbage.

I waited till the train stopped at the first station, got off, caught the back end of the car, expecting the conductor to get up and go out at the stop. But the old son-of-a-gun was enjoying himself too much to be bothered with the mere detail of running his train. He never arose. The flagman was holding down two jobs on that run.

After the train started, I came in the back door and took a seat in the rear of the coach. Jack would have to get up at the crossover, twenty miles ahead, for his orders, and I'd get my chance then. Leaning back on the cushions, I watched Mary. She was polite, but not at all cordial to Jack. He led the conversation; she nodded occasionally in reply. Stop after stop we made, and he stuck fast. The evening began to fade when the brakeman came through the car and lit the kerosene lamps. In the soft glow from the lights, Mary's profile, when she turned her head, was like that of some Greek goddess, startlingly clear in the half gloom of the coach. We were clattering along at a forty-mile clip, the old wooden coach creaking and groaning as it rattled over the rail joints or swayed around the curves.

Without warning, it happened. I plunged forward as the brakes set in emergency. Diamond Jack leaped from his seat, went sliding down the aisle on all fours at the sudden check in our speed. A violent crash, the rip of splintered wood, the ringing clang of struck metal, and the coach swayed in a sickening lurch. We were derailed. A series of heavy jolting thumps sounded as we left the steel and bounded over the cross-ties.

Even as I made my way toward Mary, I knew we were going to turn over. Before I reached the place where she sat, the car was down on one side, the screaming tinkle of shattering window panes sounding loud above the cries and frantic shrieks of the passengers. Over we went. I grabbed the racks above the seats and held on. Bottom up the coach turned, swayed for a few seconds on its cracking roof and then fell heavily back down on its side.

I had reached Mary. My arms were around her, holding her up.

A little catch was in her voice when she cried: "Oh, it's you!"

I had no time for words then. The stench of kerosene came to my nostrils, and what I dreaded was even then starting. A minute later a frantic, fear-filled voice yelled:

"*Fire!*"

"Come, Mary, let's get out of here quick."

"I can't," she answered. "My foot is fast."

Then, in the mounting light from the burning end of the coach, I saw. Her foot was jammed between the back of the seat in front and the side of the coach. I caught the plush-covered cushion, bent my back and pulled. I could not move it.

Outside, I could hear the sound of axes beating a tattoo on the roof. The train crew was trying to chop through. I raised my voice in a yell. No one answered.

The smell of burning paint and varnish, of smoldering cloth became stronger. The smoke billowed and eddied around me while I futilely tugged at the seat back. It gave a little, just an inch, but not enough. All the time I strained at it, outside I could hear the hurried ax blows as they worked to cut their way through the roof. I wondered why the rescuers did not come down through the windows above. The light from the burning car grew brighter, crept nearer to the end of the coach where we were. I knew then that we need look for no help from above. For through the broken glass of the windows overhead, I saw the truck wheels of another car above us. It had slid right over the top of the one we were in.

In a very few minutes we would be beyond hope of rescue. The heat became almost unbearable. I coughed and gasped for air, panting from the strain of my exertions. Mary caught my arm, drew me to her. Above the noise of the crackling flames and the hoarse shouts and yells outside, above the steady *chop! chop! chop!* of the ax beats, I heard her command. There was no sign of fear nor a tremor in her voice. She was a thoroughbred.

"Go while you can. Leave me. No use in our both staying."

Her firm arms were around my neck, her voice low, resonant, was in my ear.

"Go," she repeated.

Then an astonishing statement came from her. Perhaps the check she held on her emotions was but a surface check; perhaps the nearness of a horrible death laid her soul bare.

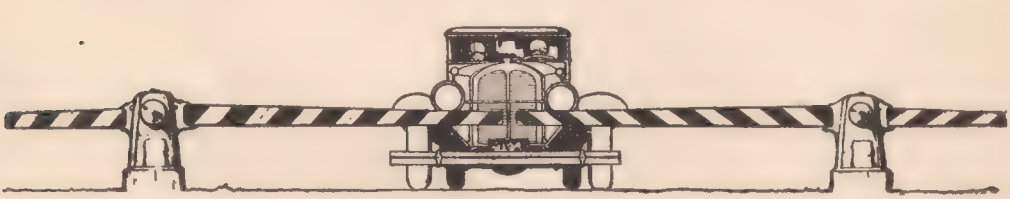
"Go," she said, "for I love you too much to have you die for me. I've loved you ever since the first time I met you."

She went limp in my arms as she fainted.

Then right beside me a heavy thud crashed. The end of a pinch bar was driven through the roof. I grabbed it with both hands, snatched it down, levered its sharp end between the seat back and the sill, pulled, lifted Mary clear. Crouched over with her across my shoulders, the bar in my hand, I walked the vertical ends of the seats to the back of the coach. I put her down, drove the bar into the jammed door, pried it open. Outside, through a jumble of débris, I could see a narrow space where a coach bottom angled up from the end of our car.

I got her through and out just in time. It was scarce a minute after we got up on the embankment above the right of way when, with a sickening crash, the car on top of the one we had escaped from fell through in a shower of sparks. I afterward learned that a half dozen passengers were in that burning car. God grant them peace.

TO BE CONTINUED



The Boomers' Corner

BOOMERS, we have to do something about this lodge idea—about this national association of wandering sons of the rails. It seems that there are so danged many of us left who, while we are not actually booming around now, still like to drift down to the yard office, put our feet on the G. Y. M.'s scarred old desk, and tell the young birds how it used to be.

The skipper of this particular corner in RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE recently had a chance to chew the fat with Don Waters and a few other booming brothers, and Don, who now is better known as an author, said he wouldn't even mind being president of the proposed organization. As Don very aptly put it, we boomers are a breed all to ourselves and, even though the place we once filled in railroading has just about completely disappeared, we ought to have an opportunity to preserve ourselves and fix it up so that we can get together once in a while, at least to see who can tell the biggest lie.

Now along these lines of reasoning a brother out in Chicago cut this off and let it come down in our track. He says:

DEAR BOOMER:

Excuse me, sir. I have been listening in since the December issue and you hit me in my soft spot. I can stay out no longer. You see, I used to have the works, too, but I lost out after the war and I am slinging a paint brush instead of a club and lamp, and oh, boy, how my heart aches when I read the Boomers' Corner!

You are dog-gone right about the itch in May. Bucking the extra board in the painting game nets me $70 for five days, no turn-arounds, no hog law, nor sixteen hours continuous time and dead-heading it home either; but I'd pass that $70 up for a real job of braking or flagging even on a narrow gauge, and I'd homeguard that job, too.

Let us have a lodge, pay dues for self-supporting purposes, courtesy exchanges, etc.; have an annual card, password, etc. By all means, take a vote by *bona fide* boomers.

I have the C. P. R., C. N., P. R. R., C. & O., I. C., S. P., C. C. C. & St. L., N. Y. C., Pan Handle, D. & R. G., L. & N., C. N. O. & T. P. (So. R. R.), P. L. & M. and the Thirteenth Engineers, operating in France, to my credit as brakeman, flagman, conductor, switchman and yard clerk.

Put out a bulletin on that lodge proposition. I'll kick in with pleasure for one and I'll feed and bunk any tramp boomer even yet. We have black sheep in the family, but who's family ain't got something dark in the clothes closet, huh?

Well, it's 12.01 A.M. and if I am going to be able to ball the jack in the morning I'll have to hit the hay.

Put the board out for Engineers H. Heberden, E. Gettemy, Hypell and J. Utley; Conductors G. D. Walker, F. L. Lee; Brakemen Guy Welsh, J. R. Hill, V. L. Jackson. You boys came across with a good railroad job in France, come on across for us here. Have a C. P. R. switch key for the asking—from the old days.

A. J. L.,
Chicago, Ill.

* * *

Then following up A. J. L. another Chicago brother cut off this thought without even a binder set on it:

DEAR BOOMER:

There are only two things that I am interested in. Railroading is first and aviation second. I haven't missed a copy of our standard magazine since it first came out the last time. I have kept every issue with the hopes of clipping the coupons and sending for a drawing, but somehow some worthy brothers felt they wanted to read what was in those magazines, so I can't find anything but the last one I bought. The only way I can keep them is to lock them up in my trunk. I used to be a tallowpot, but I lost out on account of my hearing. I am one hundred per cent strong for your national organization of boomers and if I am O. K. just put me down as a charter member.

ARTHUR L. CLARK,
4536 Sheridan Road, Chicago, Ill.

Chicago seems to be doing itself to the limit this month on contributing brothers. This one makes an application for membership, and while we are about it we know that all of you boys will agree with us when we tell him to walk right in.

DEAR BOOMER:

I have been reading the old mag since she got orders in December. I think I am entitled to grow some whiskers in the Boomers' Corner because I have been railroading off and on since I was eighteen. I have been a telegraph operator and a switchman. I quit telegraphing for no good reason at all and as I can't stay far from a railroad, I went to shuffling buggies. As an "op" I held an O. R. T. card and worked for the U. P. several times. I also hit the Pennsy, the Postal, the A. P. and was in a brokerage office. I "clerked" on the Chicago Great Western and the Chicago and Northwestern for main line money. I switched on the C. B. & Q., the Chicago Belt and the Illinois Central. Do I get on the seniority list? I am holding a stinger card now.

JAMES W. B.,
Chicago, Ill.

* * *

Taking it near and far the Boomers' Corner wouldn't be complete without once in a while allowing an old-timer to step up and tell us about some little incident or other that happened in the old days just to spice up the thing that we call railroad life.

DEAR BOOMER:

As an old-timer and a boomer, I don't have to waste time in telling you that I have had my share of thrills. My experience in railroad work has been quite varied and covering forty-eight years, so I ought to have something to crow about. When I started to be a railroad man we had link and pin couplings—no air on freight trains and only steam jam brakes on freight engines. The fireman had to set the tank brake when making a stop and when switching. He had to go out on the running board when coasting down grade with his little tallowpot and oil the valves through the cups which were placed on top of the steam chest. That is, of course, how the fireman got his name "tallowpot."

We had hemp packing in those days for both steam chest and cylinders. The pistons went with glands fitting into a box on the steam chest and the cylinders, and the hemp rope was wound around the pistons as snugly as possible. They were made steamtight by screwing up the glands. Woe to the shack if Mr. Hoghead had to horse her over and blow out his packing.

Engineers and firemen were responsible for neatness and cleanliness of their engine in those days, and the actual job of firing an engine was nothing to keeping an engine clean. We had to wash out the inside and the outside of a cab. We had to clean and polish all the brass and copper, the brass dome, the brass around the sand box, the brass handrails, the brass on the edge of the running board, the brass on the steam chest and cylinders, the bell and the whistle.

Wipers at the terminal kept the jackets clean under the running boards and they also looked after the rods, crossheads and guides.

Your interesting magazine brings back memories of the good old days to me when railroad jobs went begging. I have been personally acquainted with most of your boomer characters mentioned in your writeups. I also know a whole lot whom you have overlooked. They were quaint and comical in the heyday of the boomers' world. I might call such men to mind now and ask them to write in and give an account of themselves if they are still alive.

Here are some brothers you ought to know: William (Kid) Wade, J. J. (Kelly the Penman) Kelly, Horace (Pool) Gould, William (Stub) Morris, J. J. (Peg-Leg) Riley, Jack (Alabam) York, Alibi Zimmerman, Boomer Miller, Frank (Soak) O'Brien. In my long experience with boomers I will say that I found them generous to a fault. I have seen them go broke themselves to stake an unfortunate brother to the price of a drink or a meal.

In my own experience I have been a fireman, engineer, passenger and freight brakeman, passenger and freight conductor, switchman, yard foreman, assistant yard master and general yard master, baggageman and general superintendent. I have worked for P. F. W. & C., K. C. F. S. & G. (now the Frisco), Santa Fe, D. T. & I., A. & V., U. S. & P., C. & N. W., Illinois Central, Tennessee Central, O. C., G. T., K. C. M. & O.

I will not burden you with any of my past thrills in this get-acquainted note, but I would like to pass along something that I got a laugh out of and maybe the rest of the boomers will, too.

A conductor had two new men assigned to go out on a run with him. He found that one had two weeks' experience and the other had no experience. He assigned the one with two weeks to take the rear end, draw supplies, clean lanterns, markers and scrub out the caboose, couple up the air hose and see that all angle cocks were lined up straight with the train line.

Upon reaching the head end the greenhorn was to notify the engineer to cut in. The student finally coupled the air hose as far as the engine and then stood and gaped at the engineer. Mr. Hoghead asked what was on his mind and was informed that the conductor desired him to cut in.

"Cut in what?" asked the hoghead.

"Why, the water, you darn fool, the flagman wants to scrub out the caboose."

Well, here's luck.

H. W. M.,
Napoleon, Ohio.

On the Spot

IF you fellows who pound brass up and down the main line of this good old world haven't seen it yet, you will find elsewhere in this issue an important announcement to all telegraph operators. It has been said that the art of handwriting among telegraphers is a thing of the past. We don't believe it. That is why we have started this international competition to show the world that even though typewriters are prevalent, telegraph operators can still throw a wicked fist.

While we are on the subject of telegraph operators, we would like to take this opportunity to ask every reader of the magazine who has a friend or relative telegraphing to tip said "op" off to this competition. There is a possibility that the operator you know might not chance to learn about what RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE has started.

So much for the good news for the operators. Now here is some good news for the entire railroad reading public and for every last man who actually works on the road.

* * *

Another Old Friend

How many of you old-timers remember "The Emblem on the Whistling Post," "Len and I on the Ypres War Run," "A Long Letter From Take A Chance Simpson," "Running by the Red Lights," and many other thrilling, rib-tickling novels and novelettes of the railroad?

Horace H. Herr, the author of these, will be back with us again. There, we knew that you would remember. Now if we can find John C. Russell, who wrote the memorable *Spike Malone* stories, we will have reinstated the entire crew of former years. We don't know what Brother Herr's initial contribution will be, but he promises us a roaring novelette for perhaps our October number. We will keep you posted on the dope.

* * *

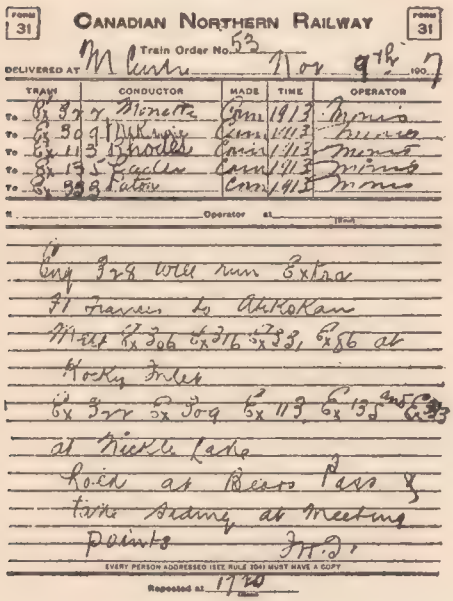
Add R. R. Slang

Brother J. H. McKinley, a hostler, hoghead and tallowpot on the Missouri Pacific, is responsible for the latest in

railroad vernacular. Brother McKinley has dubbed a switch shanty a "wise cracking plant," so if you hear the name going around now you can give the proper credit to the man who originated it.

* * *

Old Train Orders


FORM 31 — CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY — FORM 31

Train Order No. 53

DELIVERED AT Mc Murr — Nov 9th — 1907

TRAIN	CONDUCTOR	MADE	TIME	OPERATOR
To E 327	Monette	Com	1913	Timmons
To E 306	McElroy	Com	1113	Nadon
To Ex 113	Rhodes	Com	1113	Nadon
To E 135	Hayden	Com	1113	Timmons
To E 333	Eaton	Com	1913	Timmons

Operator at ____ [illegible]

Eng 328 will run Extra Ft Frances to Atikokan Meet Ex 306 Ex 316 Ex 331, E 86 at Rocky Inlet Ex 322 Ex 309 Ex 113, E 135 and E 333 at Nickle Lake Hold at Bears Pass & take Siding at Meeting Points J H T

EVERY PERSON ADDRESSED (SEE RULE 1041) MUST HAVE A COPY

Repeated at 17.20

A few months ago we reproduced an old train order dating back in the '80's and now here is something else again. These orders of 1907 show plainly that back in the days of open platforms and wind-swept whiskers, the art of running a railroad was growing complex. These orders were sent to us by E. F. McKenzie, 227 Balmoral Street, Winnipeg, who says:

They were issued by J. H. Thompson, who is now chief dispatcher at Calgary or Edmonton. McElroy, whose name appears as conductor, is now superintendent at Calgary on the Canadian National System, I believe. Nadon, Timmons and McBeth are dead. There were thirty-five engines in freight service on the 143-mile division. This was during the grain movement to the head of the Great Lakes. A train for the type engine we used consisted of 1,450 tons.

These orders are unusual in that they name an excessive number of trains in making the meeting points. For instance, the text of order 53 reproduced on this page is as follows:

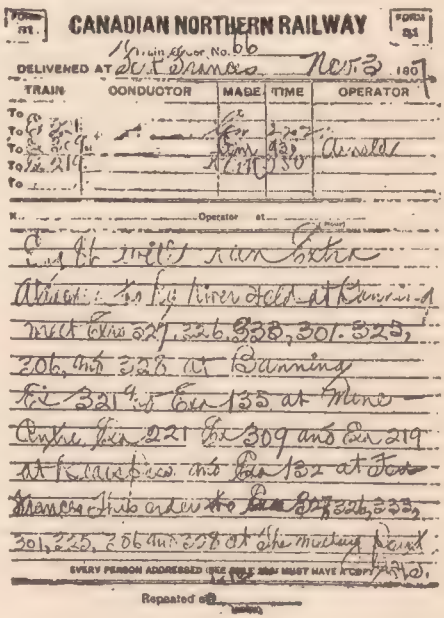
Engine 328 will run extra Ft. Frances to Atikokan, meet Extra 306, Extra 316, Extra 331, Extra 86 at Rocky Inlet; Extra 322, Extra 309, Extra 113, Extra 135 and Extra 333 at Nickel Lake. Hold at Bears Pass and take siding at meeting points. J. H. T.

The second order, No. 66, reads as follows:

Engine 86 will run Extra Atikokan to Ry. River. Hold at Banning, meet Extras 327, 326, 333, 301, 325, 306, 328 at Banning. Extra 321 and Extra 135 at Mine Centre, Extra 221, Extra 309 and Extra 219 at Bears Pass and Extra 132 at Ft. Frances. This order to Extras 327, 326, 333, 301, 325, 306 at the meeting point. J. H. T.

You can see that the time used in completing the orders and repeating them, such as 17.20 o'clock and 18.10 o'clock, was the old twenty-four-hour system that used to be in such general use in Canada.

Can any of you readers tie these orders for a complicated mess?


FORM 31 — CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY — FORM 31

Train Order No. 66

DELIVERED AT Ft Frances — Nov 3 — 1907

TRAIN	CONDUCTOR	MADE	TIME	OPERATOR
To E 327				
To E 306		Com	930	Arnold
To Ex 219				
To				

Operator at ____

Eng 86 will run Extra Atikokan to Ry River Hold at Banning meet Exs 327, 326, 333, 301, 325, 306, and 328 at Banning Ex 321 & Ex 135 at Mine Centre Ex 221 Ex 309 and Ex 219 at Bears Pass and Ex 132 at Ft Frances this order to Exs 327, 326, 333, 301, 325, 306 and 328 at the meeting point J H T

EVERY PERSON ADDRESSED (SEE RULE 1041) MUST HAVE A COPY

Repeated at

Again a Lady Speaks Up

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

If you think your mag is read "by men only" then you've got another guess coming. I'm a railroad man's wife for three months now and I wouldn't change places with any other girl I know. It's some exciting, I'll tell the world. My husband often tells me that when we first met I seemed to be more interested in his work than I was in him.

"Blood and Steam" was a wonderful story, also "Lure of the Rails," and I've already read twice "Porky Goes Up." It's a wow. I do hope you are going to keep on publishing your magazine. I can hardly wait until the first of every month when it appears on the news-stands. I must hike now, and other expressions of motion, as I must have dinner cooked for my engineer baby who will be home soon, and I'm hoping I can read "Honk and Horace" before he comes and commandeers your May edition. I know I will not get a chance again until he has read every line of it.

Wishing RAILROAD MAN'S the best of luck.

MRS. M. C. M., New York City.

* * *

An All-Star Crew

You have heard of sport writers picking all American football teams and mythical baseball nines, but now along comes a brother who not only likes the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, but picks out the best crew in the world. We hope that all of you agree with Brother Lillie.

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Your article on the Yankee Clipper, in the May issue, is so similar to our new inauguration of the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE that it seems as if the December issue was its real maiden voyage, for I have read RAILROAD MAN'S for years even after it consolidated with *Argosy*. I could feel that the god of luck was against it, and sure enough to the back track it went.

And imagine my surprise in December when I passed a news-stand and saw that bright yellow cover and red letters and a big jack with the glad green for a second! I know of no thrill as great, in the old boomer days even, as when I grabbed off a varnished job for ten days, as I did when I bought the December issue.

With due respect to all concerned I feel that we are here to stay, for the entire issue fairly breathes of your ability as an editor, with seniority rights, recognized by the entire staff, including the brass collars. My hope is they will give you a free rein, for without that we are sure to have a few hot boxes, drawheads, etc., which proved in our old run that they didn't pay.

Like the Yankee Clipper, too, we have hung to the rail and the many curves and grades during the past six months. We are here on the advertised, and every railroader who has the bug in his blood and the itch in his feet, regardless of present occupation, can declare himself in support of the magazine as it stands. Railroad all the way and we hope it will always stay a railroad man's magazine in every way. And this isn't meant as an advertisement for the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE either, as you say in your Clipper contribution for May's issue. It is the same unexplainable hold that the game has on all of us, that same feeling that you put over one hundred per cent in your contributions of "The Broadway Limited" and "The Yankee Clipper;" the born railroader who is always welcome in the switch shanty, bunk house, president's car (kitchen end) of course. If it came down to brass tacks a real rail would be welcome on the "Private" end I know. I have been down the line, too.

It does me good to see our growth each month toward a satisfactory report on the revenue end as well as the work end. With a good hogger, a square O. R. C., a straight-shooting fire boy and a no seat-hogging head shack; with the rear end being protected by a flagman whose desires are some day to be the brains, I can see no use in changing our manifest.

With C. W. Tyler ahead, E. S. Dellinger behind, James W. Earp the brains and J. P. Johns, W. E. Deaton, Don Waters, C. A. Roach and others in the pool crew, and with Bill the Boomer working the extra board, I think everything is hunky dory.

Bob Cross can take care of the yard end, and E. F. Harte can put pep in the game. It seems we're doing good. Why change the cover color? Let this present color become a memo of the spirit that holds and endures to cling together an organization second to none in all life, "The Born Railroader."

Well, bon voyage! Why shouldn't the public respond to this gracious move on your part? This is not a magazine; it is a living organ of the railroad game.

Cordially and faithfully yours for good,

A. J. LILLIE.

* * *

High Pressure Engine

There has been a good deal written and told about the new high pressure locomotive that is ready to operate on the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. One of our good readers, for the benefit of those who want to know briefly

something about this engine, has contributed the following:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

I should like to give your readers a little information on the new locomotive built by the American Locomotive Works at Schenectady for the Delaware & Hudson Railroad.

It is locomotive 1402 and named the "James Archbald" by order of President Loree. Archbald, for whom the giant is named, was the first division superintendent of the Pennsylvania run of the road.

The 1402 was designed by consulting engineers of the D. & H. and built by the American Locomotive Works. The eight drive wheels have a diameter of 63 inches and the boiler an inside diameter of 68 1-16 inches.

In working order she weighs 356,000 pounds. Fire box is 152 inches long and 78 inches wide. The 1402 is a coal burner and is equipped with an automatic stoker. The tender carries 14,000 gallons of water and 17½ tons of coal. Total weight of engine and tender, 290 tons.

Maximum tractive power, according to the designers, is 84,300 simple and 70,300 compound, with 18,000 more from the tender booster. She is of the consolidation type, 90 feet over all, and carries 500 pounds of steam.

This steam pressure is the highest known of any engine in the country, and possibly above that of the famous hush-hush hog of England. The smokestack, so prominent in the hogs of the late '80's, is completely done away with. Bell and light are concealed in front of the stream-lined hood. Although she is far from being as powerful as the Yellowstone type built for the Northern Pacific last year, she is a different type of freight engine and I believe in relation to size she is far more powerful. She was only completed in the latter part of April and tests to see what she will do with a string of wagons have not yet been completed. She has handled, up to date, a 3,000-ton train with perfect ease over very stiff grades.

E. D., Glens Falls, N. Y.

* * *

Poets' Corner

We are glad to be able to comply with the request of E. B., Butte, Montana, and reprint herewith a poem which was vastly popular when it first made its appearance in RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE of a bygone day.

Back On the Santa Fe

BY OWEN HUGH O'NEIL

Out from Los Angeles sweeping, gathering speed as we whirl;
Into the desert leaping, where the heat waves skyward swirl;
The hills, they are far behind us; level and straight the trail;
Away and away to Barstow, over a shining rail.
Now with a soothing murmur, now with a fitful start,
And my own heart echoes the throbbing of the engine's mighty heart.
That chapter is closed forever, but my thoughts still backward stray
To those days, of my life the sweetest, back on the Santa Fe.

Say, are the switch-lights blinking as they blinked in the days long dead?
Say, are the signals winking as they change from white to red?
Say, are the same old faces in the same old places to-night?
The same hands guiding the moguls so steadily on their flight?
Dick Warner, my fine old fellow, patient and true and strong—
Does he gaze from the right-hand window at the vista narrow and long?
Do the sands of the desert, flying, his face and his fingers flay,
As he rolls through the old "Mohavvy," back on the Santa Fe?

Wallace and Baldwin, bravest and best that ever I knew,
Are they pounding over the iron on their way to San Berdoo?
And Redden—they call him "the cyclone," but his heart is as good as gold;
Cool in the face of danger, fearless and ever bold;
An engineer to be proud of 'way up in the three thousand class—
Swift on the level stretches, safe and sure on the Pass;
When the stars are faintly twinkling, when the morning sky is gray,
Is he swinging them into Barstow, back on the Santa Fe?

Strange, how I hear their voices after the lapse of years!
Strange, how I see the faces of those sturdy old engineers!
Strange, how I feel a longing surge up within my soul,
To feel once more the swaying, the slue and the lurch and roll!
To gaze on the lanterns swinging on the road that I call my own,
To feel my way in the darkness down the steeps of the dread Cajon!
That chapter is closed forever, but my thoughts shall always stray
Backward, through time and distance—back to the Santa Fe!

* * *

Now if you want a real thriller, the request made by P. A. B. of Bridgeport, Connecticut, ought to fill the bill. This also is a reprint from the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE of other days.

The Hell-Bound Train

By F. M. Lehman

Tom Gray lay down on a barroom floor,
Having drunk so much he could drink no more,
And fell asleep, with a troubled brain,
To dream that he rode on the hell-bound train.
The engine, with blood, was red and damp,
And dismally lit with a brimstone lamp.
An imp, for fuel, was shoveling bones,
As the furnace roared with a thousand groans.

The boiler was filled with lager beer,
And the devil himself was the engineer;
The passengers made such a motley crew,
Church member, Atheist, Gentile, and Jew.
Rich men in broadcloth, beggars in rags,
Handsome young ladies and withered hags,
Yellow and black men, red and white,
Chained together, a horrible sight.

Faster and faster the engine flew;
Wilder and wilder the country grew;
Louder and louder the thunder crashed;
Brighter and brighter the lightning flashed;
Hotter and hotter the air became,
Till the clothes were burned from each quivering frame,
And in the distance they heard a yell,
"Ha! Ha!" cracked the devil. "We're nearing hell."

And, oh, how the passengers shrieked with pain,
And begged the devil to stop the train.
But he capered about and danced with glee,
And laughed and joked at their agony.
"My faithful friends you have done my work,
And the devil can never a pay-day shirk.
You have bullied the weak and robbed the poor,
And the hungry brother have turned from your door;

"You have gathered up gold where the canker rusts,
And given full vent to your hellish lusts;
You've drank and rioted and murdered and lied,
And mocked at God in your hellish pride;
You've paid full fare, so I carry you through,
For it is only right that you get your due,
For every laborer is worth his hire,
So I land you safe in my lake of fire.

"Where my fiery imps will torment you forever,
And all in vain you will sigh for a Saviour."
Then Tom awoke with an awful cry;
His clothes soaked wet and his hair standing high.
And he prayed as he had never prayed before
To be saved from hell and the devil's power.
And his crying and praying were not in vain,
For he never more rode on the hell-bound train.

* * *

F. R. G., Hamilton, Ontario, has put up a problem to the Poets' Corner. He wants two favors. First he wants to know if any brother can supply the rest of the poem that starts:

She was lame and loose and leaking,
And the coal was full of slag,
As she staggered up the mountain grade
With all that she could drag.

And then there is another he wants that goes like this:

You may be a mogul or switcher.
For status I care not a rap.
I'll lift you back to your place on the track,
Or drag your bones to the scrap.

Who can help us out?

* * *

So here we are back to the coupon again. The original drawings which illustrate Railroad Man's stories are going like the proverbial stack of flats at the gravy spot, and this is what you have to do to get an original drawing. You have to get three of these coupons in a row, fill them out and mail them in with your request. Don't ask for photographs. Pen and ink drawings only. Let's go!

"HERE'S MY VOTE"

Editor,
Railroad Man's Magazine,
280 Broadway, New York City.

The stories and features I like best in your August issue are:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

Name.....

Occupation.....

Street.....

City.....*State*.....

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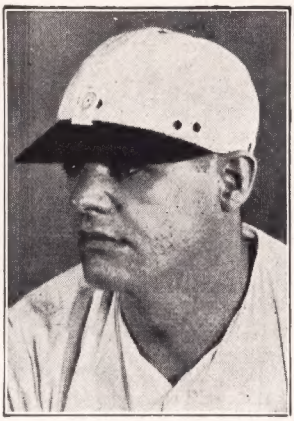

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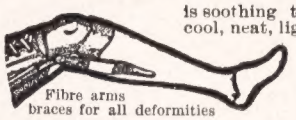
Buchstein's Fibre Limb



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What telegraph operator, or ex-operator, to-day has the fastest, most legible telegraphic "fist"? See the coupon on page 82.

He *never* SUFFERED from what *Troubles* YOU...

Constant physical toil, coarse, wholesome foods kept him free from constipation. The nerve strain of business, too little exercise, unbalanced, hasty meals—all increase your need for scientific aid in keeping regular.

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